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COCKERMOUTH Castle and the River Derwent, near Wordsworth's Birthplace.

"The fairest of all rivers, loved
To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song.

. . . . . .

On his smooth breast the shadow of those towers
That yet survive, a shattered monument
Of feudal sway."

— The Prelude, Book i, p. 19.

With
Wordsworth in England

Being a Selection of the Poems and Letters of

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Which have to do with English Scenery
and English Life

Selected and Arranged by

ANNA BENNESON MCMAHAN

Editor of "Florence in the Poetry of the Brownings," etc.

With over Sixty Illustrations
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THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, CAMBRIDGE, U. S. A.

To One of the "Best Knowers" of

WORDSWORTH

GEORGE RECORD PECK

In Memory of

Two Decades of Friendship

What were mighty Nature's self?
Her features, could they win us,
Unhelped by the poetic voice
That hourly speaks within us?

YARROW REVISITED.

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Introduction

OF all poets, William Wordsworth is the one who has taken most pains that his readers shall know every influence and every experience that have shaped his life and his verse. "The Prelude," a poem of fourteen books with over eight thousand lines, and "The Excursion," with nine books and nearly nine thousand lines, are witnesses. But their very voluminousness stands as a bar against that intimate acquaintance which it was the poet's hope to foster. The world, however mistakenly, is content to take these for the most part on trust, familiar perhaps with a few noble citations, often without even knowing their source. Reduced to their simplest terms, these poems are the story of a man of exceptional natural endowments finding his chosen companions in the rivers, woods, hills, and mountains, in sky and sun and cloud and storm. These spoke to him "rememberable things," — at first a simple message, later a revelation of the intimacy between this Nature of "sense and outward things" and his own soul, the Universe, and God. To interpret and pass on this message became Wordsworth's life-work. "Every great poet is a teacher. I wish to be considered as a teacher or nothing," he said. His desire has been realized; year by year the number increases of those who recognize Wordsworth as the Great Teacher of the nineteenth century.

It would be foolish to claim that there is any magic in the special landscape which had such power over Wordsworth's life and poetry; yet so full are his poems of local allusions that no lover of them can fail to wish to identify the actual spots mentioned. The attempt to do so from the top of a coach, with a copy of "The Excursion" in hand, is a familiar sight in the Lake District of England. The result is a failure both geographically and poetically. It is now twenty years since Wordsworth's principal editor and biographer, Professor Knight, suggested that "a volume of Selections limited to those which allude to localities in the Lake Country, containing fifty to one hundred illustrations, would be found to cast an unexpected flood of light upon the whole district, and the poet's work in connection with it." Until the present year, no such volume has been offered. The "Selections" by Mr. Stopford Brooke, prefaced by his charming introduction and illustrated by pen-and-ink drawings, appears while this volume is passing through the press. "With Wordsworth in England" has for its aim to cover also that fertile and brilliant period of Wordsworth's life when he lived in Somersetshire, before settling in the Lake Country.

Also, it is time that this generation should begin to take a truer view of the *human* side of Wordsworth. Somehow his name fails to evoke the warm personal attachment felt toward most of our poets. A certain *aloofness* (to borrow Coleridge's word) is commonly attributed to his personality. The popular conception is that he was a man entirely self-sufficient, silent, reserved, caring little for the affectionate side of life, loving nothing

so much as his own poetry, and living a life of seclusion from the world entirely from his own choice. Yet not so felt his contemporaries. His sister Dorothy writes, "William has a sort of violence of affection, if I may so term it, which demonstrates itself every moment of the day when the objects of his affection are present with him, in a thousand almost imperceptible attentions to their wishes, in a sort of restless watchfulness which I know not how to describe, a tenderness that never sleeps, and at the same time such a delicacy of manners as I have observed in few men." We know on the same authority that he was "adored" by his brothers John and Christopher, and Coleridge exclaimed, "God love him! When I speak in terms of admiration due to his intellect, I fear lest these terms should keep out of sight the amiableness of his manners." So passionately jealous was his love for his only daughter that the thought of her marriage even to a man he liked caused him so many sleepless nights and such agonies of mind as were painful to behold. From the sorrow of her death, which occurred three years before his own, he never fully recovered. His love for children was so great that his fellow-traveller at Nîmes reported him as less interested in the famous Roman amphitheatre than in two children at play with flowers there. Wordsworth was heard to exclaim, "Oh, you little darlings, how I wish I could carry you home to Rydal Mount in my pocket!"

For hospitality the Wordsworth household is something phenomenal in domestic annals. In the early days of life in Dove Cottage, a house of six small rooms, the joint income of brother and sister, barely one hundred pounds a

year, guests seem to have been considered one of their absolute necessities. To them came and lingered, sometimes for weeks at a time, such guests as John Wordsworth, the poet's sailor brother, Coleridge and his wife, Southey, John Wilson, Walter Scott, Sir George and Lady Beaumont, Thomas Clarkson, Charles Lloyd, and the Coleridge children. In view of the fact that Wordsworth himself did many of the chores and split all the firewood for the sake of economy, it speaks volumes for his genial nature as host. And when we read of the smoking chimneys, the leaking roofs, and other household tribulations, our respect for Dorothy as a housekeeper, who somehow contrived to make all these people happy in Dove Cottage, is almost equal to our admiration of her more shining gifts. Poor as the Wordsworths were in those days, one of their first outlays was for a second guest-chamber, lined by Dorothy with the newspapers of the day to save the expense of wall-paper.

After Wordsworth's marriage, and under the more ample roof of Rydal Mount, the list of guests grew still longer. In fact, few men have ever attracted to themselves a larger circle of intimate friends, and even adorers. Some of the Hutchinsons (the family of Mrs. Wordsworth) were always inmates of the household; Isabel Fenwick counted it the great happiness of her life to join the circle, and share with the other women-folk the duties of amanuensis. De Quincey, Wordsworth's successor in Dove Cottage, Arnold of Rugby at Fox How, John Wilson at Elleray, and Southey at Keswick, continually availed themselves of their privileges as neighbors. Wordsworth's infrequent

visits to London were eagerly awaited by Charles and Mary Lamb, Henry Crabb Robinson, Benjamin Haydon, Gladstone, Rogers, and many others less known to fame. Walter Scott loved him devotedly, and even Byron, who had written hateful things about Wordsworth, changed his mind after meeting the man himself.

Too little is known about the letters of Wordsworth. There is no complete compilation of them. Their neglect is perhaps due partially to Lowell's sweeping assertion, "In all his published correspondence you shall not find a letter, but only essays." This statement needs now to be modified, owing to many hundreds of letters which have come to light since this judgment was written, thirty years ago. Up to that time only a few dozen were known, and many of these were of the nature of "open letters," being written to express his views on public matters, and with an eye to possible publication. When it comes to personal letters, such as he wrote to Haydon, to Sir William Rowan Hamilton, to his Cambridge chums, Wrangham, Losh, and Mathews, and to Sir Walter Scott — most of these unknown to Lowell probably — we find them not at all dull. If Wordsworth be not exactly spontaneous in his epistolary style, the fact is partly due to certain physical disabilities, especially a great weakness of the eyes which forced him almost always to employ another hand than his own in putting his thoughts on paper.

No apology can be needed for including also some of the letters of Dorothy Wordsworth. It is simply following Wordsworth's own precedent in using her material

as his own, — "she gave me eyes, she gave me ears," — and he might have added that sometimes she gave him words as well. In his prose he often took passages bodily from her Journals, as if oblivious in which mind they first originated; and, in his poems, there is sometimes but the slight transformation needed for the verse form. Dorothy's letters, like women's letters usually, tell us the little daily incidents of the home or of the walks and talks abroad, and furnish valuable flashes of insight into the manner in which Wordsworth turned facts into poetry.

Another delusion that needs to be shattered is that Wordsworth's life was exceptionally sheltered from obstacles, that everything went his way, and that he had no unsatisfied longings. On the contrary, he had more than the usual difficulties in fixing upon a career by which he could make a living. The money due him from his father's estate was withheld by a dishonest debtor for nearly twenty years. His poetry did not "take" and (so he told Matthew Arnold) did not for many years bring him in enough to buy his shoestrings; at the age of sixty he declared that the entire literary earnings of his long life had been about equal to those of a lawyer for two retainers or of the singer of two songs. He contrived somehow to live, marry, and travel on an income of one hundred pounds a year, but there were times when this meant a diet of "essence of carrots, cabbages, and other esculent vegetables, not excluding parsley" — the produce of his own garden. He did not allow such facts to embitter him, but he did not enjoy poverty any more than most men do.

Moreover, this stay-at-home man often declared that the

one passion of his life was for *travelling*. In his declining years the chief grudge he bore against Jeffrey for his harsh treatment in the *Edinburgh* was not for the literary wrong done him, but that "it prevented his going to Italy until he was sixty-three years old, by delaying the sale of his works." It was a wish to raise money enough to take a walking tour with his sister Dorothy and his neighbor Coleridge that gave the first impulse toward the publication of that epoch-making book "Lyrical Ballads." Five pounds being needed, and the combined purses of the three being unequal to such a strain, they planned to raise the amount by composing a poem *en route*, for magazine publication. The scheme grew from a single poem to a volume containing twenty-three poems, nineteen of which were furnished by Wordsworth. Comparing Southey with himself, Wordsworth says: "*Books* were his passion; and *wandering*, I can with truth affirm, was mine." A Wanderer is the hero of his principal work, known to the world as "The Excursion," but during its composition always called by the family "The Pedlar Poem." Bearing in mind that Pedlars or Packmen were more esteemed in those days than now, it is significant that Wordsworth should confess, "Had I been born in a class which would have deprived me of what is called a liberal education, it is not unlikely that being strong in body I should have taken to a way of life such as that in which my Pedlar passed the greater part of his days." He speaks with enthusiasm of the opportunities offered by such a life to an intimate knowledge of human concerns. Persons of nomadic habits, —beggars, waggoners, leech-gatherers, emigrants, destitute

wayfaring folk such as a roving soldier's widow or a criminal, outcast sailor — these and such as these always attracted him.

Wordsworth's self-appreciation has been made the subject of many a merry jest. That Wordsworth was fully conscious of the supreme importance of what he had to say is doubtless true. How could it be otherwise without an entire default of the critical faculty? But that it left him insensible to the work of others or jealous of their success is absolutely false. His abhorrence of envy was great. He recalled with regret two occasions in his life when he had suffered from this "horrid feeling," but neither of them was connected with his literary composition, — once when distanced in studying Italian by a fellow-student at Cambridge, and once when he tripped up his brother's heels in a foot-race when the brother was about to outstrip him. To competent criticism he was humbly deferential. When Sir Henry Taylor and Mr. Lockhart criticised the sonnets, he replied: "I have altered them as well as I could to meet your wishes, and trust you will find them improved, as I am sure they are where I have adopted your own words." He believed that his writings would live because "We have all of us one human heart"; but self-assurance like this is not arrogance, it is the self-confidence that accompanies all genius when it is of the highest order. Shakespeare in his "Sonnets," Spenser, and Milton are instances. As a matter of fact, Wordsworth underestimated rather than overestimated that effect of his verse on modern thought of which we are the living witnesses.

Of Wordsworth's originality it is hardly possible to say too much. With most poets, especially in their early work, there are traces of the influences of other minds, — as Browning was indebted to Shelley, Shelley himself to Southey, Keats to Spenser, etc. But Wordsworth seems never to have come under the spell of any other poet; his themes are those which he encountered in his daily walks, his similes are drawn from things which he had observed with his own eyes.

Even the French Revolution, which certainly did for a time dominate him, lost its hold as soon as he began to see to what it was leading. His justification for his change in political ideals is a grand protest against the bonds which the word *consistency* makes for men of smaller mind, — "I should think I had lived to little purpose if my notions on the subject of government had undergone no modification. My youth must, in that case, have been without enthusiasm and my manhood endured with small capability of profiting by reflection." The "Sonnets to Liberty" are the place to which we must turn to learn how true a patriot Wordsworth was at heart. To an American visitor he said that, although he was known to the world only as a poet, he had given twelve hours' thought to the condition and prospects of society for one to poetry.

It was Nature — Nature in the largest meaning of that word — that was Wordsworth's great teacher and inspirer. True, it was Nature in her spiritual rather than in her material or pictorial aspects; therefore this is indeed the great matter for the reader of Wordsworth. Many and

able are the guides who have offered themselves for this upper region; but if one be himself attuned to the message, no guide is needed, and without such harmony no guide can avail. Other readers, perhaps of not less insight, but only of less patience, may welcome the humbler service here offered, — a guide to some of Wordsworth's well-beloved haunts, — hoping that at some happy moment, at some favored spot, perchance, to attain to the same vision which the poet recognized in his young friend on the top of Helvellyn:

> "For the power of hills is on thee,
> As was witnessed through thine eye,
> Then, when old Helvellyn won thee
> To confess their majesty."

A. B. McM.

Grasmere, England
June, 1907.

WORDSWORTH'S Birthplace, Cockermouth.

WITH WORDSWORTH IN ENGLAND

THE YEARS 1770 TO 1795

COCKERMOUTH: HAWKSHEAD: CAMBRIDGE

INTRODUCTORY

NOTWITHSTANDING all that has been said, and truly, of the simplicity and lack of pretension in Wordsworth's life, it is notable that, with the exception of Dove Cottage, his successive homes were in houses of considerable dignity and spaciousness. This is particularly true of his birthplace, a commodious, well-built house, standing in the midst of fine grounds, by far the best dwelling in the small Cumberland town of Cockermouth. The deep garden at the back ends in a high terrace adorned with beautiful plants, shaded by noble trees, and overhanging the swiftly flowing Derwent. That Wordsworth always retained tender memories of this place where he and his sister Dorothy, younger by two years, spent their early childhood is told often in his later verse. The finding of the sparrow's nest in the hedge of privet and roses on the terrace-wall; the distant height of Skiddaw from the same view-point; the far-off hill road that appealed to his imagination of lands beyond,

are unforgotten. The Derwent is not only to him always the "fairest of all rivers," the "glory of the vale," but it is also "a tempting playmate whom we dearly loved," a "voice that flowed along my dreams." Cockermouth Castle, a few hundred yards away, is not only a "shattered monument of feudal sway," but a playground in whose courts he had chased the butterfly or in whose dungeons he had made himself a voluntary prisoner. "Fostered alike by beauty and by fear, much favoured in my birthplace," he says.

On the death of his mother, when he was nine years old, he was sent to school at Hawkshead, in the adjoining county of Lancaster. Although his name may still be seen rudely carved on the desk where he sat, it was not in the school-room that he got his real education, but rather when he rose early to walk five miles round the Lake of Esthwaite before any one else was astir, and

> *"sat among the woods*
> *Alone upon some jutting eminence,*
> *At the first gleam of dawn-light when the vale,*
> *Yet slumbering lay in utter solitude,"*

or when, in search of woodcocks, he was tempted to take the bird caught in another's trap and

> *"heard among the solitary hills,*
> *Low breathings coming after me, and sounds*
> *Of undistinguishable motion, steps*
> *Almost as silent as the turf they trod."*

That he was even then a boy of no common mould, notwithstanding that he was the best skater and the most

adventurous of mountain climbers, is shown by what he told years after, — that he sometimes used to have to stop and grasp a tree or a wall to assure himself of the reality of the visible things, so keenly sensitive was he to the unseen presences, that moved slowly through his mind by day and were a trouble to his dreams at night.

Rarely have the poets recorded for us the actual birth-moments of their poetic consciousness. Wordsworth describes two such, with a minuteness that almost enables us to fix the exact spot and hour. The first was when he was scarcely fourteen years old, one evening when walking between Hawkshead and Ambleside. The sun was just setting behind the familiar hills; the multitude of changing shadows, the forests outlined in strong relief upon the background of brilliant sky, filled him with a new and surprising pleasure. Had any poet ever noted the infinite varieties and impressions of Nature in her common aspects? None that he had ever read, and he made up his mind to be that kind of a poet.

Four years later came another epoch-making hour in his poetical history. It was in his first college vacation, and with joy he had returned to the old home and haunts at Hawkshead. As befitted one with some experience of life, he made a point of entering into the interests of his old comrades, of joining in their festivities with even more zest than formerly. Far into the night these were sometimes prolonged, and on one

occasion the sun was rising as he turned his steps homeward. But to him it was no common sunrise: —

> *"The solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds,*
> *Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;*
> *. . . . I made no vows, but vows*
> *Were then made for me; bond unknown to me*
> *Was given that I should be, else sinning greatly,*
> *A dedicated Spirit."*

For their own sakes these scenes are worth visiting, — the quaint old market town of Hawkshead, proud of its gingerbread and its "wiggs"; the picturesque church; the antique dwellings with their curious gables and pent-houses, and with a brook running under one of the principal streets. In walking distance, in every direction are spots of romantic beauty, — Tarn Hows, the valleys of Yewdale and Langdale leading to glistening mountain tarns, the noble heights of Old Man Coniston and Wetherlam, and those "lusty twins," the Langdale Pikes.

But for the Wordsworth lover there is added the charm of realizing that it was here, in comparative solitude, that the boy recognized those "gleams like the flashing of a shield," here that he began that constant and intimate communion with Nature that fitted him for his high office as her Great Interpreter. Even farther may one wander and still be on classic ground, — over the hill of Sawrey to the now well-peopled shores of Lake Windermere, or to the Vale of Deadly Nightshade where

> *"Stands yet a mouldering pile with fractured arch,*
> *Belfry, and images and living trees,"*

the birds still building their nests and singing as sweetly as did that single wren in the nave one day, when

> *"there I could have made*
> *My dwelling-place, and lived forever there*
> *To hear such music."*

While still a school-boy, the death of his father left Wordsworth both homeless and penniless. A payment due the estate, which should have been divided among the five children, was withheld from them not only now but for twenty years more. It was William, the second son, that seemed to give the guardians most anxiety. But the uncles on the Wordsworth side finally decided to give him a university training, hoping to fit him for some dignified career, and sent him to Cambridge.

He was then seventeen and a half years old, — a country-bred lad unused to restraints of any kind, and thoroughly hating most of the studies he was required to take. "Frantic and dissolute" were the words he used of the student-life. Though he confessed that it had, at first, some attractions for him, it soon began to repel, and he returned to his old solitary and introspective ways. The chief shaping effect seems to have come from the thought that Milton and other poets had been his predecessors there, and he resolved that he, too, would become a poet. Naturally, this determination was not hailed with joy by the practical uncles who were paying his bills. Several safe and eminently respectable careers were proposed; but

he felt himself too young for a curacy, disliked the law, abandoned thoughts of the army from fear of being sent to the West Indies and contracting yellow fever; meditated journalism, but found no one willing to join in the enterprise; and finally went to France, where he stayed fifteen months and had a rude and sad awakening from the fond dreams he had cherished for the French Revolution.

No wonder that the long-suffering guardians came to regard him as both lazy and obstinate, and that the Cooksons, his mother's relatives who had his beloved sister Dorothy in charge, actually forbade him to visit her, for fear of his contaminating influence. It was in order to show that he had abilities of some sort that he now (1792) resolved to publish two poems which he had on hand, — "An Evening Walk," addressed to Dorothy, and "Descriptive Sketches," a poetic memorial of a walking tour through France, Switzerland, and the north of Italy, two years before.

The critics were almost unanimous in their disparagement; the reading public paid them almost no attention. One young man, however, an undergraduate who had entered Cambridge the month after Wordsworth had taken his degree, had the insight to perceive that these were no common verses, and to recognize in them germs of a new order of poetry. This man was Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and later, when he himself commanded the public ear, he wrote "Seldom, if ever, was the emergence of an original

poetic genius above the literary horizon more evidently announced."

The following Summer (1793) was also important for his poetry, for it was then that he first visited the south of England, spending one month of "calm and glassy days" in the delightful Isle of Wight, and making the acquaintance of the brothers William and Raisley Calvert. Later he left for a solitary expedition, mostly on foot, to the north of Wales. He crossed the desolate expanse of Salisbury Plain, proceeded to Bath and Bristol, and thence up the Wye to Tintern. All of these places were afterwards used as settings or furnished incidents for poems. It was at Goodrich Castle that he met the little girl of "We are Seven"; and this was his first sight of the Abbey at Tintern which later was to become the theme of the poem which we could perhaps least well spare of any, — the one of which it has been truly said, "The essential thought of 'Tintern Abbey' was as new to the world as the thought of the Sermon on the Mount."

FALLS of Lodore.

"*Where Derwent rests, and listens to the roar*
That stuns the tremulous cliffs of high Lodore."
— An Evening Walk, p. 9.

AN EVENING WALK[1]

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY

Far from my dearest Friend, 't is mine to rove
Through bare grey dell, high wood, and pastoral cove;
Where Derwent rests, and listens to the roar
That stuns the tremulous cliffs of high Lodore;
Where peace to Grasmere's lonely island leads,
To willowy hedge-rows, and to emerald meads;
Leads to her bridge, rude church, and cottaged grounds,
Her rocky sheepwalks, and her woodland bounds;
Where, undisturbed by winds, Winander[2] sleeps
'Mid clustering isles, and holly-sprinkled steeps;
Where twilight glens endear my Esthwaite's shore,
And memory of departed pleasures, more.

Fair scenes, erewhile, I taught, a happy child,
The echoes of your rocks my carols wild:
The spirit sought not then, in cherished sadness,
A cloudy substitute for failing gladness.
In youth's keen eye the livelong day was bright,
The sun at morning, and the stars at night,
Alike, when first the bittern's hollow bill
Was heard, or woodcocks roamed the moonlight hill.

In thoughtless gaiety I coursed the plain,
And hope itself was all I knew of pain;
For then, the inexperienced heart would beat

[1] This was Wordsworth's first published poem (1793). It had been written during his first two college vacations; the "young lady" to whom it is addressed was his sister Dorothy.

[2] Wynander-mere was the original form of Windermere.

At times, while young Content forsook her seat,
And wild Impatience, pointing upward, showed,
Through passes yet unreached, a brighter road.
Alas! the idle tale of man is found
Depicted in the dial's moral round;
Hope with reflection blends her social rays
To gild the total tablet of his days;
Yet still, the sport of some malignant power,
He knows but from its shade the present hour.
But why, ungrateful, dwell on idle pain?
To show what pleasures yet to me remain,
Say, will my Friend, with unreluctant ear,
The history of a poet's evening hear?

. . . . . .

Just where a cloud above the mountain rears
An edge all flame, the broadening sun appears;
A long blue bar its ægis orb divides,
And breaks the spreading of its golden tides;
And now that orb has touched the purple steep
Whose softened image penetrates the deep.
'Cross the calm lake's blue shades the cliffs aspire,
With towers and woods, a 'prospect all on fire';
While coves and secret hollows, through a ray
Of fainter gold, a purple gleam betray.
Each slip of lawn the broken rocks between
Shines in the light with more than earthly green:
Deep yellow beams the scattered stems illume,
Far in the level forest's central gloom:
Waving his hat, the shepherd, from the vale,
Directs his winding dog the cliffs to scale, —

The dog, loud barking, 'mid the glittering rocks,
Hunts, where his master points, the intercepted flocks.
Where oaks o'erhang the road the radiance shoots
On tawny earth, wild weeds, and twisted roots;
The druid-stones a brightened ring unfold;
And all the babbling brooks are liquid gold;
Sunk to a curve, the day-star lessens still,
Gives one bright glance, and drops behind the hill.
In these secluded vales, if village fame,
Confirmed by hoary hairs, belief may claim;
When up the hills, as now, retired the light,
Strange apparitions mocked the shepherd's sight.
The form appears of one that spurs his steed
Midway along the hill with desperate speed;
Unhurt pursues his lengthened flight, while all
Attend, at every stretch, his headlong fall.
Anon, appears a brave, a gorgeous show
Of horsemen-shadows moving to and fro;
At intervals imperial banners stream,
And now the van reflects the solar beam;
The rear through iron brown betrays a sullen gleam.
While silent stands the admiring crowd below,
Silent the visionary warriors go,
Winding in ordered pomp their upward way
Till the last banner of the long array
Has disappeared, and every trace is fled
Of splendour — save the beacon's spiry head
Tipt with Eve's latest gleam of burning red.
Now, while the solemn evening shadows sail,
On slowly waving pinions, down the vale;

And, fronting the bright west, yon oak entwines
Its darkening boughs and leaves, in stronger lines;[1]
'T is pleasant near the tranquil lake to stray
Where, winding on along some secret bay,
The swan uplifts his chest, and backward flings
His neck, a varying arch, between his towering wings:
The eye that marks the gliding creature sees
How graceful pride can be, and how majestic, ease.
While tender cares and mild domestic loves
With furtive watch pursue her as she moves,
The female with a meeker charm succeeds,
And her brown little ones around her leads,
Nibbling the water lilies as they pass,
Or playing wanton with the floating grass.
She, in a mother's care, her beauty's pride
Forgetting, calls the wearied to her side;
Alternately they mount her back, and rest
Close by her mantling wings' embraces prest.

. . . . . .

Now, with religious awe, the farewell light
Blends with the solemn colouring of night;
'Mid groves of clouds that crest the mountain's brow,
And round the west's proud lodge their shadows throw,

[1] This is feebly and imperfectly expressed, but I recollect distinctly the very spot where this first struck me. It was in the way between Hawkshead and Ambleside and gave me extreme pleasure. The moment was important in my poetical history; for I date from it my consciousness of the infinite variety of natural experiences which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country, so far as I was acquainted with them: and I made a resolution to supply in some degree the deficiency. I could not have been at that time above fourteen years of age. (Wordsworth's Note.)

Like Una shining on her gloomy way,
The half-seen form of Twilight roams astray;
Shedding, through paly loop-holes mild and small,
Gleams that upon the lake's still bosom fall;
Soft o'er the surface creep those lustres pale
Tracking the motions of the fitful gale.
With restless interchange at once the bright
Winds on the shade, the shade upon the light.
No favoured eye was e'er allowed to gaze
On lovelier spectacle in faery days;
When gentle Spirits urged a sportive chase,
Brushing with lucid wands the water's face:
While music, stealing round the glimmering deeps,
Charmed the tall circle of the enchanted steeps.
— The lights are vanished from the watery plains:
No wreck of all the pageantry remains.
Unheeded night has overcome the vales:
On the dark earth the wearied vision fails;
The latest lingerer of the forest train,
The lone black fir, forsakes the faded plain;
Last evening sight, the cottage smoke, no more,
Lost in the thickened darkness, glimmers hoar;
And, towering from the sullen dark-brown mere,
Like a black wall, the mountain-steeps appear.
— Now o'er the soothed accordant heart we feel
A sympathetic twilight slowly steal,
And ever, as we fondly muse, we find
The soft gloom deepening on the tranquil mind.

POEMS RELATING TO WORDSWORTH'S CHILDHOOD DAYS WITH HIS SISTER DOROTHY

THE SPARROW'S NEST

Behold, within the leafy shade,
Those bright blue eggs together laid!
On me the chance-discovered sight
Gleamed like a vision of delight.
I started — seeming to espy
The home and sheltered bed,
The Sparrow's dwelling, which, hard by
My Father's house, in wet or dry
My sister Emmeline[1] and I
Together visited.

She looked at it and seemed to fear it;
Dreading, tho' wishing, to be near it:
Such heart was in her, being then
A little Prattler among men.
The Blessing of my later years
Was with me when a boy:
She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;
And humble cares, and delicate fears;
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears;
And love, and thought, and joy.

[1] "Emmeline" is often substituted for the real Dorothy, in the poet's verses. The high terrace of the end of the Cockermouth garden was a favorite playground of the two children, and the terrace wall of closely clipt privet and roses gave an almost impervious shelter to birds building their nests there.

TO A BUTTERFLY

Stay near me — do not take thy flight!
A little longer stay in sight!
Much converse do I find in thee,
Historian of my infancy!
Float near me; do not yet depart!
Dead times revive in thee:
Thou bring'st, gay creature as thou art!
A solemn image to my heart,
My father's family![1]

Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days,
The time, when, in our childish plays,
My sister Emmeline and I
Together chased the butterfly!
A very hunter did I rush
Upon the prey: — with leaps and springs
I followed on from brake to bush;
But she, God love her, feared to brush
The dust from off its wings.

SONNETS RELATING TO WORDSWORTH'S CHILDHOOD AT COCKERMOUTH

IN SIGHT OF THE TOWN OF COCKERMOUTH[2]

A point of life between my Parent's dust,
And yours, my buried Little ones! am I;
And to those graves looking habitually

[1] My sister and I were parted immediately after the death of our mother, who died in 1778, both being very young. (Wordsworth's Note.)

[2] Where the author was born, and his father's remains are laid.

In kindred quiet I repose my trust.
Death to the innocent is more than just,
And, to the sinner, mercifully bent;
So may I hope, if truly I repent
And meekly bear the ills which bear I must:
And You, my Offspring! that do still remain,
Yet may outstrip me in the appointed race,
If e'er, through fault of mine, in mutual pain
We breathed together for a moment's space,
The wrong, by love provoked, let love arraign,
And only love keep in your hearts a place.

ADDRESS FROM THE SPIRIT OF COCKERMOUTH CASTLE[1]

"Thou look'st upon me, and dost fondly think,
Poet! that, stricken as both are by years,
We, differing once so much, are now Compeers,
Prepared, when each has stood his time, to sink
Into the dust. Erewhile a sterner link
United us; when thou, in boyish play,
Entering my dungeon, didst become a prey
To soul-appalling darkness. Not a blink
Of light was there; — and thus did I, thy Tutor,
Make thy young thoughts acquainted with the grave;
While thou wert chasing the winged butterfly
Through my green courts; or climbing, a bold suitor,
Up to the flowers whose golden progeny
Still round my shattered brow in beauty wave."

[1] Written when Wordsworth was sixty-three years old.

DERWENTWATER and Friar's Crag, near Keswick.

. . . . . *"Faint the beam*
Of human life when first allowed to gleam
On mortal notice. — Glory of the vale,
Such thy meek outset."

— To the River Derwent, p. 17.

TO THE RIVER DERWENT

Among the mountains were we nursed, loved Stream,
Thou near the eagle's nest — within brief sail,
I, of his bold wing floating on the gale,
Where thy deep voice could lull me! Faint the beam
Of human life when first allowed to gleam
On mortal notice. — Glory of the vale,
Such thy meek outset, with a crown, though frail,
Kept in perpetual verdure by the steam
Of thy soft breath! — Less vivid wreath entwined
Nemæan victor's brow; less bright was worn,
Meed of some Roman chief — in triumph borne
With captives chained; and shedding from his car
The sunset splendours of a finished war
Upon the proud enslavers of mankind!

FROM "THE PRELUDE," BOOK I

COCKERMOUTH AND THE RIVER DERWENT

[THE POET FAVOURED IN HIS BIRTHPLACE]

. . . . . .

The Poet, gentle creature as he is,
Hath, like the Lover, his unruly times;
His fits when he is neither sick nor well,
Though no distress be near him but his own
Unmanageable thoughts: his mind, best pleased
While she as duteous as the mother dove
Sits brooding, lives not always to that end,
But like the innocent bird, hath goadings on

That drive her as in trouble through the groves;
With me is now such passion, to be blamed
No otherwise than as it lasts too long.

. . . . . .

. . . Thus my days are past
In contradiction; with no skill to part
Vague longing, haply bred by want of power,
From paramount impulse not to be withstood,
A timorous capacity, from prudence,
From circumspection, infinite delay.
Humility and modest awe, themselves
Betray me, serving often for a cloak
To a more subtle selfishness; that now
Locks every function up in blank reserve,
Now dupes me, trusting to an anxious eye
That with intrusive restlessness beats off
Simplicity and self-presented truth.
Ah! better far than this, to stray about
Voluptuously through fields and rural walks,
And ask no record of the hours, resigned
To vacant musing, unreproved neglect
Of all things, and deliberate holiday.
Far better never to have heard the name
Of zeal and just ambition, than to live
Baffled and plagued by a mind that every hour
Turns recreant to her task; takes heart again,
Then feels immediately some hollow thought
Hang like an interdict upon her hopes.
This is my lot; for either still I find
Some imperfection in the chosen theme,

Or see of absolute accomplishment
Much wanting, so much wanting, in myself,
That I recoil and droop, and seek repose
In listlessness from vain perplexity,
Unprofitably travelling toward the grave,
Like a false steward who hath much received
And renders nothing back.
Was it for this
That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved
To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song,
And, from his alder shades and rocky falls,
And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice
That flowed along my dreams? For this, didst thou,
O Derwent! winding among grassy holms
Where I was looking on, a babe in arms,
Make ceaseless music that composed my thoughts
To more than infant softness, giving me
Amid the fretful dwellings of mankind
A foretaste, a dim earnest, of the calm
That Nature breathes among the hills and groves.

When he had left the mountains and received
On his smooth breast the shadow of those towers
That yet survive, a shattered monument
Of feudal sway, the bright blue river passed
Along the margin of our terrace walk;
A tempting playmate whom we dearly loved.
Oh, many a time have I, a five years' child,
In a small mill-race severed from his stream,
Made one long bathing of a summer's day;

Basked in the sun, and plunged and basked again
Alternate, all a summer's day, or scoured
The sandy fields, leaping through flowery groves
Of yellow ragwort; or, when rock and hill,
The woods, and distant Skiddaw's lofty height,
Were bronzed with deepest radiance, stood alone
Beneath the sky, as if I had been born
On Indian plains, and from my mother's hut
Had run abroad in wantonness, to sport
A naked savage, in the thunder shower.

FROM "THE PRELUDE," BOOK I

HAWKSHEAD AND ESTHWAITE LAKE

[LOVE OF NATURE DEVELOPED IN SCHOOL-DAYS]

Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
Fostered alike by beauty and by fear,
Much favoured in my birthplace and no less
In that beloved Vale to which erelong
We were transplanted; — there were we let loose
For sports of wider range. Ere I had told
Ten birthdays, when among the mountain slopes
Frost, and the breath of frosty wind, had snapped
The last autumnal crocus, 't was my joy
With store of springes o'er my shoulder hung
To range the open heights where woodcocks run
Along the smooth green turf. Through half the night,
Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied
That anxious visitation; — moon and stars

ESTHWAITE Lake and Hawkshead.

"That belovèd Vale, to which erelong
We were transplanted."
— The Prelude, Book i, p. 20.

Were shining o'er my head. I was alone,
And seemed to be a trouble to the peace
That dwelt among them. Sometimes it befell
In these night wanderings, that a strong desire
O'erpowered my better reason, and the bird
Which was the captive of another's toil
Became my prey; and when the deed was done
I heard among the solitary hills
Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of undistinguishable motion, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they trod.

Nor less, when spring had warmed the cultured Vale,
Moved we as plunderers where the mother-bird
Had in high places built her lodge; though mean
Our object and inglorious, yet the end
Was not ignoble. Oh! when I have hung
Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock
But ill sustained, and almost (so it seemed)
Suspended by the blast that blew amain,
Shouldering the naked crag, oh, at that time
While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
Blow through my ear! the sky seemed not a sky
Of earth — and with what motion moved the clouds!

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
Like harmony in music; there is a dark
Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles

Discordant elements, makes them cling together
In one society. How strange, that all
The terrors, pains, and early miseries,
Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interfused
Within my mind, should e'er have borne a part,
And that a needful part, in making up
The calm existence that is mine when I
Am worthy of myself! Praise to the end!
Thanks to the means which Nature deigned to employ;
Whether her fearless visitings, or those
That came with soft alarm, like hurtless light
Opening the peaceful clouds; or she would use
Severer interventions, ministry
More palpable, as best might suit her aim.

One summer evening (led by her) I found
A little boat tied to a willow tree
Within a rocky cave, its usual home.
Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping in
Pushed from the shore. It was an act of stealth
And troubled pleasure, nor without the voice
Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on;
Leaving behind her still, on either side,
Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
Until they melted all into one track
Of sparkling light. But now, like one who rows,
Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point
With an unswerving line, I fixed my view
Upon the summit of a craggy ridge,
The horizon's utmost boundary; far above

Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.
She was an elfin pinnace; lustily
I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat
Went heaving through the water like a swan;
When, from behind that craggy steep till then
The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
As if with voluntary power instinct,
Upreared its head. I struck and struck again,
And growing still in stature the grim shape
Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
And measured motion like a living thing,
Strode after me. With trembling oars I turned,
And through the silent water stole my way
Back to the covert of the willow tree;
There in her mooring-place I left my bark,—
And through the meadows homeward went, in grave
And serious mood; but after I had seen
That spectacle, for many days, my brain
Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts
There hung a darkness, call it solitude
Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
Like living men, moved slowly through the mind
By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought
That givest to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion, not in vain
By day or star-light thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects, with enduring things —
With life and nature — purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying, by such discipline,
Both pain and fear, until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.
Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours rolling down the valley made
A lonely scene more lonesome, among woods,
At noon and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine;
Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.

And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and visible for many a mile
The cottage windows blazed through twilight gloom,
I heeded not their summons: happy time
It was indeed for all of us — for me

It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud
The village clock tolled six, — I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home. All shod with steel,
We hissed along the polished ice in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures, — the resounding horn,
The pack loud chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle; with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the stars
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.
Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star
That fled, and, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain; and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me — even as if the earth had rolled

With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.

Ye Presences of Nature in the sky
And on the earth! Ye Visions of the hills!
And Souls of lonely places! can I think
A vulgar hope was yours when ye employed
Such ministry, when ye, through many a year
Haunting me thus among my boyish sports,
On caves and trees, upon the woods and hills,
Impressed, upon all forms, the characters
Of danger or desire; and thus did make
The surface of the universal earth,
With triumph and delight, with hope and fear,
Work like a sea?
Not uselessly employed,
Might I pursue this theme through every change
Of exercise and play, to which the year
Did summon us in his delightful round.

We were a noisy crew; the sun in heaven
Beheld not vales more beautiful than ours;
Nor saw a band in happiness and joy
Richer, or worthier of the ground they trod.
I could record with no reluctant voice
The woods of autumn, and their hazel bowers
With milk-white clusters hung; the rod and line,
True symbol of hope's foolishness, whose strong

ANN TYSON'S Cottage, Wordsworth's Lodgings, Hawkshead.

" Ye lowly cottages wherein we dwelt,
A ministration of your own was yours."

— The Prelude, Book i, p. 27.

And unreproved enchantment led us on
By rocks and pools shut out from every star,
All the green summer, to forlorn cascades
Among the windings hid of mountain brooks.
— Unfading recollections! at this hour
The heart is almost mine with which I felt,
From some hill-top on sunny afternoons,
The paper kite high among fleecy clouds
Pull at her rein like an impetuous courser;
Or, from the meadows sent on gusty days,
Beheld her breast the wind, then suddenly
Dashed headlong, and rejected by the storm.

Ye lowly cottages wherein we dwelt,
A ministration of your own was yours;
Can I forget you, being as you were
So beautiful among the pleasant fields
In which ye stood? or can I here forget
The plain and seemly countenance with which
Ye dealt out your plain comforts? Yet had ye
Delights and exultations of your own.
Eager and never weary we pursued
Our home-amusements by the warm peat-fire
At evening, when with pencil, and smooth slate
In square divisions parcelled out and all
With crosses and with cyphers scribbled o'er,
We schemed and puzzled, head opposed to head
In strife too humble to be named in verse:

. . . . . .

Nor, sedulous as I have been to trace
How Nature by extrinsic passion first
Peopled the mind with forms sublime or fair,
And made me love them, may I here omit
How other pleasures have been mine, and joys
Of subtler origin; how I have felt,
Not seldom even in that tempestuous time,
Those hallowed and pure motions of the sense
Which seem, in their simplicity, to own
An intellectual charm; that calm delight
Which, if I err not, surely must belong
To those first-born affinities that fit
Our new existence to existing things,
And, in our dawn of being, constitute
The bond of union between life and joy.

Yes, I remember when the changeful earth,
And twice five summers on my mind had stamped
The faces of the moving year, even then
I held unconscious intercourse with beauty
Old as creation, drinking in a pure
Organic pleasure from the silver wreaths
Of curling mist, or from the level plain
Of waters coloured by impending clouds.

The sands of Westmoreland, the creeks and bays
Of Cumbria's rocky limits, they can tell
How, when the Sea threw off his evening shade,
And to the shepherd's hut on distant hills
Sent welcome notice of the rising moon,
How I have stood, to fancies such as these

A stranger, linking with the spectacle
No conscious memory of a kindred sight,
And bringing with me no peculiar sense
Of quietness or peace; yet have I stood,
Even while mine eye hath moved o'er many a league
Of shining water, gathering as it seemed,
Through every hair-breadth in that field of light,
New pleasure like a bee among the flowers.

Thus oft amid those fits of vulgar joy
Which, through all seasons, on a child's pursuits
Are prompt attendants, 'mid that giddy bliss
Which, like a tempest, works along the blood
And is forgotten; even then I felt
Gleams like the flashing of a shield; — the earth
And common face of Nature spake to me
Rememberable things; sometimes, 't is true,
By chance collisions and quaint accidents
(Like those ill-sorted unions, work supposed
Of evil-minded fairies), yet not vain
Nor profitless, if haply they impressed
Collateral objects and appearances,
Albeit lifeless then, and doomed to sleep
Until maturer seasons called them forth
To impregnate and to elevate the mind.
— And if the vulgar joy by its own weight
Wearied itself out of the memory,
The scenes which were a witness of that joy
Remained in their substantial lineaments
Depicted on the brain, and to the eye

Were visible, a daily sight; and thus
By the impressive discipline of fear,
By pleasure and repeated happiness,
So frequently repeated, and by force
Of obscure feelings representative
Of things forgotten, these same scenes so bright,
So beautiful, so majestic in themselves,
Though yet the day was distant, did become
Habitually dear, and all their forms
And changeful colours by invisible links
Were fastened to the affections.

I began
My story early — not misled, I trust,
By an infirmity of love for days
Disowned by memory — ere the breath of spring
Planting my snowdrops among winter snows:
Nor will it seem to thee, O Friend[1]! so prompt
In sympathy, that I have lengthened out
With fond and feeble tongue a tedious tale.
Meanwhile, my hope has been, that I might fetch
Invigorating thoughts from former years;
Might fix the wavering balance of my mind,
And haply meet reproaches too, whose power
May spur me on, in manhood now mature
To honourable toil. Yet should these hopes
Prove vain, and thus should neither I be taught
To understand myself, nor thou to know
With better knowledge how the heart was framed
Of him thou lovest; need I dread from thee

[1] Coleridge, to whom the Prelude was dedicated.

HAWKSHEAD Schoolroom.

"With pencil and smooth slate

. . . . . .

We schemed and puzzled, head opposed to head
In strife too humble to be named in verse."

—**The Prelude, Book i, p. 27.**

Harsh judgments, if the song be loth to quit
Those recollected hours that have the charm
Of visionary things, those lovely forms
And sweet sensations that throw back our life,
And almost make remotest infancy
A visible scene, on which the sun is shining?

One end at least hath been attained; my mind
Hath been revived, and if this genial mood
Desert me not, forthwith shall be brought down
Through later years the story of my life.
The road lies plain before me; — 't is a theme
Single and of determined bounds; and hence
I choose it rather at this time, than work
Of ampler or more varied argument,
Where I might be discomfited and lost:
And certain hopes are with me, that to thee
This labour will be welcome, honoured Friend!

FROM "THE PRELUDE," BOOK II

HAWKSHEAD AND LAKE WINDERMERE

[SPORTS OF BOYHOOD]

Thus far, O Friend! have we, though leaving much
Unvisited, endeavoured to retrace
The simple ways in which my childhood walked;
Those chiefly that first led me to the love
Of rivers, woods, and fields. The passion yet
Was in its birth, sustained as might befall

By nourishment that came unsought; for still
From week to week, from month to month, we lived
A round of tumult. Duly were our games
Prolonged in summer till the daylight failed;
No chair remained before the doors; the bench
And threshold steps were empty; fast asleep
The labourer, and the old man who had sate
A later lingerer; yet the revelry
Continued and the loud uproar: at last,
When all the ground was dark, and twinkling stars
Edged the black clouds, home and to bed we went,
Feverish with weary joints and beating minds.
Ah! is there one who ever has been young,
Nor needs a warning voice to tame the pride
Of intellect and virtue's self-esteem?
One is there, though the wisest and the best
Of all mankind, who covets not at times
Union that cannot be; — who would not give
If so he might, to duty and to truth
The eagerness of infantine desire?
A tranquillising spirit presses now
On my corporeal frame, so wide appears
The vacancy between me and those days
Which yet have such self-presence in my mind,
That, musing on them, often do I seem
Two consciousnesses, conscious of myself
And of some other Being. A rude mass
Of native rock, left midway in the square
Of our small market village, was the goal
Or centre of these sports; and when, returned

After long absence, thither I repaired,
Gone was the old grey stone, and in its place
A smart Assembly-room usurped the ground
That had been ours. There let the fiddle scream,
And be ye happy! Yet, my Friends! I know
That more than one of you will think with me
Of those soft starry nights, and that old Dame
From whom the stone was named, who there had sate,
And watched her table with its huckster's wares
Assiduous, through the length of sixty years.

We ran a boisterous course; the year span round
With giddy motion. But the time approached
That brought with it a regular desire
For calmer pleasures, when the winning forms
Of Nature were collaterally attached
To every scheme of holiday delight
And every boyish sport, less grateful else
And languidly pursued.
When summer came,
Our pastime was, on bright half-holidays,
To sweep along the plain of Windermere
With rival oars; and the selected bourne
Was now an Island musical with birds
That sang and ceased not; now a Sister Isle
Beneath the oaks' umbrageous covert, sown
With lilies of the valley like a field;
And now a third small Island, where survived
In solitude the ruins of a shrine
Once to Our Lady dedicate, and served

Daily with chaunted rites. In such a race
So ended, disappointment could be none,
Uneasiness, or pain, or jealousy:
We rested in the shade, all pleased alike,
Conquered and conqueror. Thus the pride of strength,
And the vain-glory of superior skill,
Were tempered; thus was gradually produced
A quiet independence of the heart:
And to my Friend who knows me I may add,
Fearless of blame, that hence for future days
Ensued a diffidence and modesty,
And I was taught to feel, perhaps too much,
The self-sufficing power of Solitude.

Our daily meals were frugal, Sabine fare!
More than we wished we knew the blessing then
Of vigorous hunger — hence corporeal strength
Unsapped by delicate viands; for, exclude
A little weekly stipend, and we lived
Through three divisions of the quartered year
In penniless poverty. But now to school
From the half-yearly holidays returned,
We came with weightier purses, that sufficed
To furnish treats more costly than the Dame
Of the old grey stone, from her scant board, supplied.
Hence rustic dinners on the cool green ground,
Or in the woods, or by a river side
Or shady fountains, while among the leaves
Soft airs were stirring, and the mid-day sun
Unfelt shone brightly round us in our joy.

FURNESS Abbey.

"To St. Mary's honour built,
Stands yet a mouldering pile with fractured arch,
Belfry, and images, and living trees;
A holy scene!"

— The Prelude, Book ii, p. 35.

See Sonnet "At Furness Abbey," p. 312.

Nor is my aim neglected if I tell
How sometimes, in the length of those half-years,
We from our funds drew largely; — proud to curb,
And eager to spur on, the galloping steed;
And with the courteous inn-keeper, whose stud
Supplied our want, we haply might employ
Sly subterfuge, if the adventure's bound
Were distant: some famed temple where of yore
The Druids worshipped, or the antique walls
Of that large abbey, where within the Vale
Of Nightshade, to St. Mary's honour built,
Stands yet a mouldering pile with fractured arch,
Belfry, and images, and living trees;
A holy scene! — Along the smooth green turf
Our horses grazed. To more than inland peace,
Left by the west wind sweeping overhead
From a tumultuous ocean, trees and towers
In that sequestered valley may be seen,
Both silent and both motionless alike;
Such the deep shelter that is there, and such
The safeguard for repose and quietness.

Our steeds remounted and the summons given,
With whip and spur we through the chauntry flew
In uncouth race, and left the cross-legged knight,
And the stone-abbot, and that single wren
Which one day sang so sweetly in the nave
Of the old church, that — though from recent showers
The earth was comfortless, and, touched by faint
Internal breezes, sobbings of the place

And respirations, from the roofless walls
The shuddering ivy dripped large drops — yet still
So sweetly 'mid the gloom the invisible bird
Sang to herself, that there I could have made
My dwelling-place, and lived for ever there
To hear such music. Through the walls we flew
And down the valley, and, a circuit made
In wantonness of heart, through rough and smooth
We scampered homewards. Oh, ye rocks and streams,
And that still spirit shed from evening air!
Even in this joyous time I sometimes felt
Your presence, when with slackened step we breathed
Along the sides of the steep hills, or when
Lighted by gleams of moonlight from the sea
We beat with thundering hoofs the level sand.

Midway on long Winander's eastern shore,
Within the crescent of a pleasant bay,
A tavern stood; no homely featured house,
Primeval like its neighbouring cottages,
But 't was a splendid place, the door besct
With chaises, grooms, and liveries, and within
Decanters, glasses, and the blood-red wine.
In ancient times, and ere the Hall was built
On the large island, had this dwelling been
More worthy of a poet's love, a hut,
Proud of its own bright fire and sycamore shade.
But — though the rhymes were gone that once inscribed
The threshold, and large golden characters,
Spread o'er the spangled sign-board, had dislodged

The old Lion and usurped his place, in slight
And mockery of the rustic painter's hand —
Yet, to this hour, the spot to me is dear
With all its foolish pomp. The garden lay
Upon a slope surmounted by a plain
Of a small bowling-green; beneath us stood
A grove, with gleams of water through the trees
And over the tree-tops; nor did we want
Refreshment, strawberries and mellow cream.
There, while through half an afternoon we played
On the smooth platform, whether skill prevailed
Or happy blunder triumphed, bursts of glee
Made all the mountains ring. But, ere night-fall,
When in our pinnace we returned at leisure
Over the shadowy lake, and to the beach
Of some small island steered our course with one,
The Minstrel of the Troop, and left him there,
And rode off gently, while he blew his flute
Alone upon the rock — oh, then, the calm
And dead still water lay upon my mind
Even with a weight of pleasure, and the sky,
Never before so beautiful, sank down
Into my heart, and held me like a dream!
Thus were my sympathies enlarged, and thus
Daily the common range of visible things
Grew dear to me: already I began
To love the sun; a boy I loved the sun,
Not as I since have loved him, as a pledge
And surety of our earthly life, a light
Which we behold and feel we are alive;

Nor for his bounty to so many worlds —
But for this cause, that I had seen him lay
His beauty on the morning hills, had seen
The western mountain touch his setting orb,
In many a thoughtless hour, when, from excess
Of happiness, my blood appeared to flow
For its own pleasure, and I breathed with joy.
And, from like feelings, humble though intense,
To patriotic and domestic love
Analogous, the moon to me was dear;
For I could dream away my purposes,
Standing to gaze upon her while she hung
Midway between the hills as if she knew
No other region, but belonged to thee,
Yea, appertained by a peculiar right
To thee and thy grey huts, thou one dear Vale!

Those incidental charms which first attached
My heart to rural objects, day by day
Grew weaker, and I hasten on to tell
How Nature, intervenient till this time
And secondary, now at length was sought
For her own sake.

[MORNING WALKS]

. . . . . .

My morning walks
Were early; — oft before the hours of school
I travelled round our little lake, five miles
Of pleasant wandering.

BELLE ISLE, Lily of the Valley Island, and Lady Holme in Lake Windermere.

"An Island musical with birds
That sang and ceased not; now a Sister Isle
Beneath the oaks' umbrageous covert, sown
With lilies of the valley like a field;
And now a third small Island."

. . . . . .

Nor seldom did I lift our cottage latch
Far earlier, ere one smoke-wreath had risen
From human dwelling, or the vernal thrush
Was audible; and sate among the woods
Alone upon some jutting eminence,
At the first gleam of dawn-light, when the Vale,
Yet slumbering, lay in utter solitude.
How shall I seek the origin? where find
Faith in the marvellous things which then I felt?
Oft in these moments such a holy calm
Would overspread my soul, that bodily eyes
Were utterly forgotten, and what I saw
Appeared like something in myself, a dream,
A prospect in the mind.

. . . . . .

[POETIC VISIONS]

My seventeenth year was come,
And whether from this habit rooted now
So deeply in my mind, or from excess
In the great social principle of life
Coercing all things into sympathy,
To unorganic natures were transferred
My own enjoyments; or the power of truth
Coming in revelation, did converse
With things that really are; I, at this time,
Saw blessings spread around me like a sea.
Thus while the days flew by, and years passed on,
From Nature and her overflowing soul,

I had received so much that all my thoughts
Were steeped in feeling; I was only then
Contented, when with bliss ineffable
I felt the sentiment of Being spread
O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still;
O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought
And human knowledge, to the human eye
Invisible, yet liveth to the heart;
O'er all that leaps and runs, and shouts and sings,
Or beats the gladsome air; o'er all that glides
Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself,
And mighty depth of waters. Wonder not
If high the transport, great the joy I felt,
Communing in this sort through earth and heaven
With every form of creature, as it looked
Towards the Uncreated with a countenance
Of adoration, with an eye of love.
One song they sang, and it was audible,
Most audible, then, when the fleshly ear,
O'ercome by humblest prelude of that strain,
Forgot her functions, and slept undisturbed.

If this be error, and another faith
Find easier access to the pious mind,
Yet were I grossly destitute of all
Those human sentiments that make this earth
So dear, if I should fail with grateful voice
To speak of you, ye mountains, and ye lakes
And sounding cataracts, ye mists and winds
That dwell among the hills where I was born.

If in my youth I have been pure in heart,
If, mingling with the world, I am content
With my own modest pleasures, and have lived
With God and Nature communing, removed
From little enmities and low desires —
The gift is yours; if in these times of fear,
This melancholy waste of hopes o'erthrown,
If, 'mid indifference and apathy,
And wicked exultation when good men
On every side fall off, we know not how,
To selfishness, disguised in gentle names
Of peace and quiet and domestic love
Yet mingled not unwillingly with sneers
On visionary minds; if, in this time
Of dereliction and dismay, I yet
Despair not of our nature, but retain
A more than Roman confidence, a faith
That fails not, in all sorrow my support,
The blessing of my life — the gift is yours,
Ye winds and sounding cataracts! 't is yours,
Ye mountains! thine, O Nature! Thou hast fed
My lofty speculations; and in thee,
For this uneasy heart of ours, I find
A never-failing principle of joy
And purest passion.

. . . . . .

FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO MISS JANE POLLARD

PENRITH [1787].

. . . I can bear the ill-nature of all my relations, for the affection of my brothers consoles me in all my griefs; but how soon shall I be deprived of this consolation. They are so affectionate. . . . William and Christopher are very clever. . . . John, who is to be the sailor, has a most affectionate heart. He is not so bright as either William or Christopher, but he has very good common sense. . . . Richard, the eldest, is equally affectionate and good, but he is far from being as clever as William. . . . Many a time have W., J., C., and myself shed tears together, tears of bitterest sorrow. We all of us feel each day the loss we sustained when we were deprived of our parents; and each day do we receive fresh insults of the most mortifying kind, the insults of servants. . . . Uncle Kit (who is our guardian) cares little for us. . . . We have been told a thousand of times that we were liars. . . . W. has a wish to be a lawyer if his health will permit. . . .

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

FROM "THE PRELUDE," BOOK III

[CAMBRIDGE]

IT was a dreary morning when the wheels
Rolled over a wide plain o'erhung with clouds,
And nothing cheered our way till first we saw

LAKE Windermere near Ferry Nab.

"Standing alone, as from a rampart's edge,
I overlooked the bed of Windermere,
Like a vast river, stretching in the sun."

— The Prelude, Book iv, p. 49.

The long-roofed chapel of King's College lift
Turrets and pinnacles in answering files,
Extended high above a dusky grove.

Advancing, we espied upon the road
A student clothed in gown and tasselled cap,
Striding along as if o'ertasked by Time,
Or covetous of exercise and air;
He passed — nor was I master of my eyes
Till he was left an arrow's flight behind.
As near and nearer to the spot we drew,
It seemed to suck us in with an eddy's force.
Onward we drove beneath the Castle; caught,
While crossing Magdalene Bridge, a glimpse of Cam;
And at the *Hoop* alighted, famous Inn.

. . . . . .

The Evangelist St. John my patron was:
Three Gothic courts are his, and in the first
Was my abiding-place, a nook obscure;
Right underneath, the College kitchens made
A humming sound, less tuneable than bees,
But hardly less industrious; with shrill notes
Of sharp command and scolding intermixed.
Near me hung Trinity's loquacious clock,
Who never let the quarters, night or day,
Slip by him unproclaimed, and told the hours
Twice over with a male and female voice.
Her pealing organ was my neighbour too;
And from my pillow, looking forth by light
Of moon or favouring stars, I could behold

The antechapel where the statue stood
Of Newton with his prism and silent face,
The marble index of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.

. . . . . .

[UNIVERSITY LIFE]

. . . . . .

EASILY I passed
From the remembrances of better things,
And slipped into the ordinary works
Of careless youth, unburthened, unalarmed.
Caverns there were within my mind which sun
Could never penetrate, yet did there not
Want store of leafy *arbours* where the light
Might enter in at will. Companionships,
Friendships, acquaintances, were welcome all.
We sauntered, played, or rioted; we talked
Unprofitable talk at morning hours;
Drifted about along the streets and walks,
Read lazily in trivial books, went forth
To gallop through the country in blind zeal
Of senseless horsemanship, or on the breast
Of Cam sailed boisterously, and let the stars
Come forth, perhaps without one quiet thought.

Such was the tenor of the second act
In this new life. Imagination slept,
And yet not utterly. I could not print

Ground where the grass had yielded to the steps
Of generations of illustrious men,
Unmoved. I could not always lightly pass
Through the same gateways, sleep where they had slept,
Wake where they waked, range that inclosure old,
That garden of great intellects, undisturbed.
Place also by the side of this dark sense
Of noble feeling, that those spiritual men,
Even the great Newton's own ethereal self,
Seemed humbled in these precincts, thence to be
The more endeared. Their several memories here
(Even like their persons in their portraits clothed
With the accustomed garb of daily life)
Put on a lowly and a touching grace
Of more distinct humanity, that left
All genuine admiration unimpaired.

Beside the pleasant Mill of Trompington
I laughed with Chaucer in the hawthorn shade;
Heard him, while birds were warbling, tell his tales
Of amorous passion. And that gentle Bard,
Chosen by the Muses for their Page of State —
Sweet Spenser, moving through his clouded heaven
With the moon's beauty and the moon's soft pace,
I called him Brother, Englishman, and Friend!
Yea, our blind Poet, who in his later day,
Stood almost single; uttering odious truth —
Darkness before, and danger's voice behind,
Soul awful — if the earth has ever lodged
An awful soul — I seemed to see him here

Familiarly, and in his scholar's dress
Bounding before me, yet a stripling youth —
A boy, no better, with his rosy cheeks
Angelical, keen eye, courageous look,
And conscious step of purity and pride.
Among the band of my compeers was one
Whom chance had stationed in the very room
Honoured by Milton's name. O temperate Bard!
Be it confest that, for the first time, seated
Within thy innocent lodge and oratory,
One of a festive circle, I poured out
Libations, to thy memory drank, till pride
And gratitude grew dizzy in a brain
Never excited by the fumes of wine
Before that hour, or since. Then, forth I ran
From the assembly; through a length of streets,
Ran, ostrich-like, to reach our chapel door
In not a desperate or opprobrious time,
Albeit long after the importunate bell
Had stopped, with wearisome Cassandra voice
No longer haunting the dark winter night.
Call back, O Friend! a moment to thy mind,
The place itself and fashion of the rites.
With careless ostentation shouldering up
My surplice, through the inferior throng I clove
Of the plain Burghers, who in audience stood
On the last skirts of their permitted ground,
Under the pealing organ. Empty thoughts!
I am ashamed of them: and that great Bard,
And thou, O Friend! who in thy ample mind

Hast placed me high above my best deserts,[1]
Ye will forgive the weakness of that hour,
In some of its unworthy vanities,
Brother to many more.

TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

Sept. 6, 1790, KESWILL.
[A small village on the Lake of Constance.]

. . . . . .

I have thought of you perpetually; and never have my eyes burst upon a scene of particular loveliness but I have almost instantly wished that you could for a moment be transported to the place where I stood to enjoy it. . . . We are now upon the point of quitting these most sublime and beautiful parts; and you cannot imagine the melancholy regret which I feel at the idea. I am a perfect enthusiast in my admiration of nature in all her various forms; and I have looked upon, and, as it were, conversed with, the objects which this country has presented to my view so long, and with such increasing pleasure, that the idea of parting from them oppresses me with a sadness similar to that I have always felt in quitting a beloved friend. . . . But it is time to talk about England. When you write to my brothers, I must beg of you to give my love, and tell them I am sorry it has not been in my power to write to them. Kit will be surprised he has not heard

[1] Of the publication of Wordsworth's first volume of poems, Coleridge had said, "Seldom if ever was the emergence of an original poetic genius above the literary horizon more evidently announced."

from me, as we were almost upon terms of regular correspondence. I had not heard from Richard for some time before I set out. I did not call upon him when I was in London; not so much because we were determined to hurry through London, but because he, as many of our friends at Cambridge did, would look upon our scheme as mad and impracticable. I expect great pleasure, on my return to Cambridge, in exulting over those of my friends who threatened us with such an accumulation of difficulties as must undoubtedly render it impossible for us to perform the tour. Everything, however, has succeeded with us far beyond my most sanguine expectations. We have, it is true, met with little disasters occasionally, but far from distressing, and they rather give us additional resolution and spirits. We have both enjoyed most excellent health; and we have been so inured to walking, that we are become almost insensible to fatigue. We have several times performed a journey of thirteen leagues over the most mountainous parts of Switzerland without any more weariness than if we had been walking an hour in the groves of Cambridge. Our appearance is singular; and we have often observed that, in passing through a village, we have excited a general smile. Our coats, which we had made light on purpose for the journey, are of the same piece; and our manner of carrying our bundles, which is upon our heads, with each an oak stick in our hands, contributes not a little to that general curiosity which we seem to excite. . . . You will remember me affectionately to my uncle and aunt; as he was acquainted with my giving up thoughts of a fellowship, he may, perhaps, not be so much

FIRST Court, St. John's College, Cambridge.

"The Evangelist St. John my patron was:
Three Gothic courts are his, and in the first
Was my abiding-place, a nook obscure."

— **The Prelude, Book iii, p. 43.**

displeased at this journey. I should be sorry if I have offended him by it. I hope my little cousin is well. I must now bid you adieu, with assuring you that you are perpetually in my thoughts, and that

I remain,

Most affectionately yours,

W. Wordsworth.

FROM "THE PRELUDE," BOOK IV

[first college vacation and visit to hawkshead]

Bright was the summer's noon when quickening steps
Followed each other till a dreary moor
Was crossed, a bare ridge clomb, upon whose top
Standing alone, as from a rampart's edge,
I overlooked the bed of Windermere,
Like a vast river, stretching in the sun.
With exultation, at my feet I saw
Lake, islands, promontories, gleaming bays,
A universe of Nature's fairest forms
Proudly revealed with instantaneous burst,
Magnificent, and beautiful, and gay.
I bounded down the hill shouting amain
For the old Ferryman; to the shout the rocks
Replied, and when the Charon of the flood
Had staid his oars, and touched the jutting pier,
I did not step into the well-known boat
Without a cordial greeting. Thence with speed
Up the familiar hill I took my way

Towards that sweet Valley where I had been reared;
'T was but a short hour's walk, ere veering round
I saw the snow-white church upon her hill
Sit like a throned Lady, sending out
A gracious look all over her domain.
Yon azure smoke betrays the lurking town;
With eager footsteps I advance and reach
The cottage threshold where my journey closed.
Glad welcome had I, with some tears, perhaps,
From my old Dame, so kind and motherly,
While she perused me with a parent's pride.
The thoughts of gratitude shall fall like dew
Upon thy grave, good creature! While my heart
Can beat never will I forget thy name.
Heaven's blessing be upon thee where thou liest
After thy innocent and busy stir
In narrow cares, thy little daily growth
Of calm enjoyments, after eighty years,
And more than eighty, of untroubled life;
Childless, yet by the strangers to thy blood
Honoured with little less than filial love.
What joy was mine to see thee once again,
Thee and thy dwelling, and a crowd of things
About its narrow precincts all beloved,
And many of them seeming yet my own!
Why should I speak of what a thousand hearts
Have felt, and every man alive can guess?
The rooms, the court, the garden were not left
Long unsaluted, nor the sunny seat
Round the stone table under the dark pine,

Friendly to studious or to festive hours;
Nor that unruly child of mountain birth,
The famous brook, who, soon as he was boxed
Within our garden, found himself at once,
As if by trick insidious and unkind,
Stripped of his voice and left to dimple down
(Without an effort and without a will)
A channel paved by man's officious care.
I looked at him and smiled, and smiled again,
And in the press of twenty thousand thoughts,
"Ha," quoth I, "pretty prisoner, are you there?"
Well might sarcastic Fancy then have whispered,
"An emblem here behold of thy own life;
In its late course of even days with all
Their smooth enthralment"; but the heart was full,
Too full for that reproach. My aged Dame
Walked proudly at my side: she guided me;
I willing, nay — nay, wishing to be led.
— The face of every neighbour whom I met
Was like a volume to me; some were hailed
Upon the road, some busy at their work,
Unceremonious greetings interchanged
With half the length of a long field between.
Among my schoolfellows I scattered round
Like recognitions, but with some constraint
Attended, doubtless, with a little pride,
But with more shame, for my habiliments,
The transformation wrought by gay attire.
Not less delighted did I take my place
At our domestic table: and, dear Friend!

In this endeavour simply to relate
A Poet's history, may I leave untold
The thankfulness with which I laid me down
In my accustomed bed, more welcome now
Perhaps than if it had been more desired
Or been more often thought of with regret;
That lowly bed whence I had heard the wind
Roar, and the rain beat hard; where I so oft
Had lain awake on summer nights to watch
The moon in splendour couched among the leaves
Of a tall ash, that near our cottage stood;
Had watched her with fixed eyes while to and fro
In the dark summit of the waving tree
She rocked with every impulse of the breeze.

Among the favourites whom it pleased me well
To see again, was one by ancient right
Our inmate, a rough terrier of the hills;
By birth and call of nature pre-ordained
To hunt the badger and unearth the fox
Among the impervious crags, but having been
From youth our own adopted, he had passed
Into a gentler service. And when first
The boyish spirit flagged, and day by day
Along my veins I kindled with the stir,
The fermentation, and the vernal heat
Of poesy, affecting private shades
Like a sick Lover, then this dog was used
To watch me, an attendant and a friend,
Obsequious to my steps early and late,

VILLAGE of Hawkshead with Wetherlam in the distance.

"I saw the snow-white church upon her hill
Sit like a thronèd Lady, sending out
A gracious look all over her domain."

— The Prelude, Book iv, p. 50.

Though often of such dilatory walk
Tired, and uneasy at the halts I made.
A hundred times when, roving high and low,
I have been harassed with the toil of verse,
Much pains and little progress, and at once
Some lovely Image in the song rose up
Full-formed, like Venus rising from the sea;
Then have I darted forwards to let loose
My hand upon his back with stormy joy,
Caressing him again and yet again.
And when at evening on the public way
I sauntered, like a river murmuring
And talking to itself when all things else
Are still, the creature trotted on before;
Such was his custom; but whene'er he met
A passenger approaching, he would turn
To give me timely notice, and straightway,
Grateful for that admonishment, I hushed
My voice, composed my gait, and, with the air
And mien of one whose thoughts are free, advanced
To give and take a greeting that might save
My name from piteous rumours, such as wait
On men suspected to be crazed in brain.

Those walks well worthy to be prized and loved —
Regretted! — that word, too, was on my tongue.
But they were richly laden with all good,
And cannot be remembered but with thanks
And gratitude, and perfect joy of heart —
Those walks in all their freshness now came back

Like a returning Spring. When first I made
Once more the circuit of our little lake,
If ever happiness hath lodged with man,
That day consummate happiness was mine,
Wide-spreading, steady, calm, contemplative.
The sun was set, or setting, when I left
Our cottage door, and evening soon brought on
A sober hour, not winning or serene,
For cold and raw the air was, and untuned:
But as a face we love is sweetest then
When sorrow damps it, or, whatever look
It chance to wear, is sweetest if the heart
Have fulness in herself; even so with me
It fared that evening. Gently did my soul
Put off her veil, and, self-transmuted, stood
Naked, as in the presence of her God.

. . . . . .

[A "DEDICATED SPIRIT"; THE BAPTISMAL MOMENT]

— I LOVED,
Loved deeply all that had been loved before,
More deeply even than ever: but a swarm
Of heady schemes jostling each other, gawds,
And feast and dance, and public revelry,
And sports and games (too grateful in themselves,
Yet in themselves less grateful, I believe,
Than as they were a badge glossy and fresh
Of manliness and freedom) all conspired
To lure my mind from firm habitual quest

Of feeding pleasures, to depress the zeal
And damp those yearnings which had once been mine —
A wild, unworldly minded youth, given up
To his own eager thoughts. It would demand
Some skill, and longer time than may be spared
To paint these vanities, and how they wrought
In haunts where they, till now, had been unknown.
It seemed the very garments that I wore
Preyed on my strength, and stopped the quiet stream
Of self-forgetfulness.
Yes, that heartless chase
Of trivial pleasures was a poor exchange
For books and nature at that early age.
'T is true, some casual knowledge might be gained
Of character or life; but at that time,
Of manners put to school I took small note,
And all my deeper passions lay elsewhere.
Far better had it been to exalt the mind
By solitary study, to uphold
Intense desire through meditative peace;
And yet, for chastisement of these regrets,
The memory of one particular hour
Doth here rise up against me. 'Mid a throng
Of maids and youths, old men, and matrons staid,
A medley of all tempers, I had passed
The night in dancing, gaiety, and mirth,
With din of instruments and shuffling feet,
And glancing forms, and tapers glittering,
And unaimed prattle flying up and down;
Spirits upon the stretch, and here and there

Slight shocks of young love-liking interspersed
Whose transient pleasure mounted to the head,
And tingled through the veins. Ere we retired,
The cock had crowed, and now the eastern sky
Was kindling, not unseen, from humble copse
And open field, through which the pathway wound,
And homeward led my steps. Magnificent
The morning rose, in memorable pomp,
Glorious as e'er I had beheld — in front,
The sea lay laughing at a distance; near,
The solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds,
Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;
And in the meadows and the lower grounds
Was all the sweetness of a common dawn —
Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
And labourers going forth to till the fields.
Ah! need I say, dear Friend! that to the brim
My heart was full: I made no vows, but vows
Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
A dedicated Spirit. On I walked
In thankful blessedness, which yet survives.

SONNETS

INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE

I

Tax not the royal Saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned —
Albeit labouring for a scanty band

ROOF of King's College Chapel,
Cambridge.

"Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely calculated less or more;
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells."

—Inside of King's College Chapel, p. 57.

Of white-robed Scholars only — this immense
And glorious Work of fine intelligence!
Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely calculated less or more;
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering — and wandering on as loth to die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.

II

What awful pérspective! while from our sight
With gradual stealth the lateral windows hide
Their Portraitures, their stone-work glimmers, dyed
In the soft chequerings of a sleepy light.
Martyr, or King, or sainted Eremite,
Whoe'er ye be, that thus, yourselves unseen,
Imbue your prison-bars with solemn sheen,
Shine on, until ye fade with coming Night! —
But, from the arms of silence — list! O list!
The music bursteth into second life;
The notes luxuriate, every stone is kissed
By sound, or ghost of sound, in mazy strife;
Heart-thrilling strains, that cast, before the eye
Of the devout, a veil of ecstasy!

III

They dreamt not of a perishable home
Who thus could build. Be mine, in hours of fear

Or grovelling thought, to seek a refuge here;
Or through the aisles of Westminster to roam:
Where bubbles burst, and folly's dancing foam
Melts, if it cross the threshold; where the wreath
Of awe-struck wisdom droops: or let my path
Lead to that younger Pile, whose sky-like dome
Hath typified by reach of daring art
Infinity's embrace; whose guardian crest,
The silent Cross, among the stars shall spread
As now, when She hath also seen her breast
Filled with mementos, satiate with its part
Of grateful England's overflowing Dead.

CATHEDRALS, ETC.

Open your gates, ye everlasting Piles!
Types of the spiritual Church which God hath reared;
Not loth we quit the newly hallowed sward
And humble altar, 'mid your sumptuous aisles
To kneel, or thrid your intricate defiles,
Or down the nave to pace in motion slow;
Watching, with upward eye, the tall tower grow
And mount, at every step, with living wiles
Instinct — to rouse the heart and lead the will
By a bright ladder to the world above.
Open your gates, ye Monuments of love
Divine! thou Lincoln, on thy sovereign hill!
Thou, stately York! and Ye, whose splendours cheer
Isis and Cam, to patient Science dear!

TO WILLIAM MATHEWS[1]

PLAS-YN-LLAN, NEAR RUTHIN,
DENBIGHSHIRE, June 17, 1791.

You will see by the date of this letter that I am in Wales, and whether you remember the place of Jones' residence or no, you will immediately conclude that I am with him. I quitted London about three weeks ago, where my time passed in a strange manner, sometimes whirled about by the vortex of its *strenua inertia*, and sometimes thrown by the eddy into a corner of the stream. Think not, however, that I had not many pleasant hours. . . . My time has been spent since I reached Wales in a very agreeable manner, and Jones and I intend to make a tour through its northern counties, — on foot, as you will easily suppose.

FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO MISS POLLARD

FORNCETT, Sunday Morning, June 26, 1791.

. . . . . .

I often hear from my brother William, who is now in Wales, where I think he seems so happy, that it is probable he will remain there all summer, or a great part of it.

. . . William, you may have heard, lost the chance (indeed the certainty) of a fellowship, by not combating his inclinations. He gave way to his natural dislike to study so dry as many parts of mathematics, consequently could

[1] Mathews, Robert Jones, and Wordsworth were fellow-students at Cambridge.

not succeed at Cambridge. He reads Italian, Spanish, Greek, Latin, and English, but never opens a mathematical book. We promise ourselves much pleasure from reading Italian together at some time. He wishes that I was acquainted with the Italian poets. William has a great attachment to poetry; so indeed has Kit, but William particularly, which is not the most likely thing to produce his advancement in the world. His pleasures are chiefly of the imagination. He is never so happy as when in a beautiful country. Do not think in what I have said that he reads not at all, for he does read a great deal; and not only poetry, and other languages he is acquainted with, but history, &c., &c. Kit has made a very good proficiency in learning. He is just seventeen. At October, '92, we shall lose him at Cambridge. . . .

FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO MISS POLLARD

FORNCETT, February 16th, 1793.

Your letter found me happy in the society of one of my dear brothers. Christopher and I have been separated for nearly five years last Christmas. Judge then of my transports at meeting him again. . . . He is like William. He has the same traits in his character, but less highly touched. He is not so ardent in any of his pursuits, but is yet more particularly attached to the same pursuits which have so irresistible an influence over William, which deprive him of the power of chaining his attention to others discordant to his feelings. Christopher is no despicable poet, but he can

become a mathematician also. He is not insensible to the beauty of the Greek and Latin classics, or any of the charms of elegant literature; but he can draw his mind from these fascinating studies, to others less alluring. He is steady and sincere in his attachments. William has both these virtues in an eminent degree; and a sort of violence of affection, if I may so term it, which demonstrates itself every moment of the day, when the objects of his affection are present with him, in a thousand almost imperceptible attentions to their wishes, in a sort of restless watchfulness which I know not how to describe, a tenderness that never sleeps, and at the same time such a delicacy of manners as I have observed in few men. . . . I hope you will spend at least a year with me. I have laid the particular scheme of happiness for each season. When I think of winter, I hasten to furnish our little parlour. I close the shutters, set out the tea-table, brighten the fire. When our refreshment is ended, I produce our work, and William brings his book to our table, and contributes at once to our instruction and amusement; and at intervals we lay aside the book, and each hazard our observations upon what has been read, without the fear of ridicule or censure. We talk over past days. We do not sigh for any pleasures beyond our humble habitation. With such romantic dreams as these I amuse my fancy. . . . My brother and I have been endeared to each other by early misfortune. We in the same moment lost a father, a mother, a home. We have been equally deprived of our patrimony. . . . These afflictions have all contributed to unite us closer by the bonds of affection, notwithstanding we have been com-

pelled to spend our youth far asunder. "We drag at each remove a lengthening chain." This idea often strikes me very forcibly. Neither absence, nor distance, nor time, can ever break the chain that links me to my brothers. . . . By this time you have doubtless seen my brother William's poems.[1] . . . The scenes which he describes have been viewed with a poet's eye, and are pourtrayed with a poet's pencil, and the poems contain many passages exquisitely beautiful; but they also contain many faults, the chief of which is obscurity, and a too frequent use of some particular expressions and uncommon words, for instance *moveless*, which he applies in a sense if not new, at least different from its ordinary one. By moveless, when applied to the swan, he means that sort of motion which is smooth, without agitation; it is a very beautiful epithet, but ought to have been cautiously used. He ought at any rate, only to have hazarded it once, instead of which it occurs three or four times. The word *viewless* also is introduced far too often. This, though not so uncommon a word as the former, ought not to have been made use of more than once or twice. I regret exceedingly that he did not submit these works to the inspection of some friend before their publication, and he also joins with me in this regret. Their faults are such as a young poet was most likely to fall into, and least likely to discover, and what the suggestions of a friend would easily have made him see, and at once correct. It is, however, an error he will never fall into again. . . .

There are some very glaring faults, but I hope that you

[1] Wordsworth's first volume, called "An Evening Walk."

will discover many beauties, which could only have been created by the imagination of a *poet*.

FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO MISS POLLARD

FORNCETT [1793].

The evening is a lovely one, and I have strolled into a neighbouring meadow, where I am enjoying the melody of birds, and the busy sounds of a fine summer's evening, while my eye is gratified by a smiling prospect of cultivated fields richly wooded, our own church, and the parsonage house. . . . William is now going upon a tour to the West of England, along with a gentleman who was formerly a schoolfellow,[1] a man of fortune, who is to bear all the expense of the journey, and only requests the favour of William's company. . . . My brother's tour will not be completed till October. . . . This favourite brother of mine happens to be no favourite with any of his near relations, except his brothers, by whom he is adored, I mean by John and Christopher. . . .

FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO MISS POLLARD

FORNCETT, June 16, Sunday Morning, 1793.

. . . . . .

I often hear from my dear brother William. I am very anxious about him just now, as he has not yet got an employment. He is looking out, and wishing for the

[1] William Calvert.

opportunity of engaging himself as tutor to some young gentleman, an office for which he is peculiarly well qualified. . . . I cannot describe his attention to me. There was no pleasure that he would not have given up with joy for half an hour's conversation with me. It was in winter (at Christmas) that he was last at Forncett; and every day, as soon as we rose from dinner, we used to pace the gravel walk in the garden till six o'clock, when we received summons (which was always welcome) to tea. Nothing but rain or snow prevented our taking this walk. Often have I gone out, when the keenest north wind has been whistling amongst the trees over our head, and have paced that walk in the garden, which will always be dear to me — from the remembrance of those very long conversations I have had upon it supported by my brother's arm. Ah! I never thought of the cold when he was with me. I am as heretical as yourself in my opinions concerning love and friendship. I am very sure that love will never bind me closer to any human being than friendship binds me to you, my earliest friends, and to William, my earliest and my dearest male friend. . . .

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO MISS POLLARD

WINDY BROW, near KESWICK [1794].

Since I wrote to —— I walked from Grasmere to Keswick, 13 miles, and at Keswick I still remain. I have been so much delighted with the people of this house, with

its situation, with the cheapness of living, and above all with the opportunity which I have of enjoying my brother's company, that although on my arrival I only talked of staying a few days, I have already been here above a fortnight, and intend staying still a few weeks longer, perhaps three or four. You cannot conceive anything more delightful than the situation of this house. It stands upon the top of a very steep bank, which rises in a direction nearly perpendicular from a dashing stream below. From the window of the room where I write, I have a prospect of the wood winding along the opposite banks of this river, of a part of the Lake of Keswick and the town, and towering above the town a woody steep of a very considerable height, whose summit is a long range of silver rocks. This is the view from the house, but a hundred yards above it is impossible to describe its grandeur. There is a natural terrace along the side of the mountain, which shelters Windybrow, whence we command a view of the whole vale of Keswick (the Vale of Elysium, as Mr Gray calls it). This vale is terminated at one end by a huge pile of grand mountains, in whose lap the lovely Lake of Derwent is placed; at the other end by the Lake of Bassenthwaite, on one side of which Skiddaw towers sublime, and on the other a range of mountains, not of equal size, but of much grandeur; and the middle part of the vale is of beautiful cultivated grounds, interspersed with cottages, and watered by a winding stream which runs between the Lakes of Derwent and Bassenthwaite. I have never been more delighted with the manners of any people than of the family under whose roof I am at present. They are the

most honest, sensible people I ever saw in their rank of life, and I think I may safely affirm, happier than anybody I know. They are contented with a supply of the bare necessaries of life, are active and industrious, and declare with simple frankness, unmixed with ostentation, that they prefer their cottage at Windy Brow to any of the showy edifices in the neighbourhood, and they believe that there is not to be found in the whole vale a happier family than they are. They are fond of reading, and reason not indifferently on what they read. We have a neat parlour to ourselves, which Mr Calvert has fitted up for his own use, and the lodging rooms are very comfortable. Till my brother gets some employment he will lodge here. Mr Calvert is not now at Windy Brow, as you will suppose. We please ourselves in calculating from our present expenses for how very small a sum we could live. We find our own food. Our breakfast and supper are of milk, and our dinner chiefly of potatoes, and we drink no tea. We have received great civilities from many very pleasant families, particularly from a Mr Spedding of Armathwaite, at whose house you may recollect my brother was staying before he went to Halifax. Mr Spedding has two daughters, who are in every respect charming women. . . . They live in the most delightful place that ever was beheld. We have been staying there three nights. William is very intimate with the eldest son.

ST. JOHN'S College Chapel,
Cambridge.

"Open your gates, ye everlasting Piles!
Types of the spiritual Church which God hath reared."

— Cathedrals, p. 58.

TO WILLIAM MATHEWS

WHITEHAVEN, May, 1794.

. . . . . .

I am at present nearly at leisure — I say *nearly*, for I am *not quite* so, as I am correcting and considerably adding to, those poems which I published in your absence.[1] It was with great reluctance that I sent those two little works into the world in so imperfect a state. But as I had done nothing by which to distinguish myself at the university, I thought these little things might show I *could* do something. They have been treated with unmerited contempt by some of the periodicals, and others have spoken in higher terms than they deserve.

. . . . . .

FROM "THE PRELUDE," BOOK V

[TRIBUTE TO BOOKS, ESPECIALLY TO FICTION AND POETRY]

. . . YET is it just
That here, in memory of all books which lay
Their sure foundations in the heart of man,
Whether by native prose, or numerous verse,
That in the name of all inspired souls —
From Homer the great Thunderer, from the voice
That roars along the bed of Jewish song,
And that more varied and elaborate,
Those trumpet-tones of harmony that shake

[1] "The Evening Walk" and "Descriptive Sketches."

Our shores in England, — from those loftiest notes
Down to the low and wren-like warblings, made
For cottagers and spinners at the wheel,
And sun-burnt travellers resting their tired limbs,
Stretched under wayside hedge-rows, ballad tunes,
Food for the hungry ears of little ones,
And of old men who have survived their joys —
'T is just that in behalf of these, the works,
And of the men that framed them, whether known
Or sleeping nameless in their scattered graves,
That I should here assert their rights, attest
Their honours, and should, once for all, pronounce
Their benediction; speak of them as Powers
For ever to be hallowed; only less,
For what we are and what we may become,
Than Nature's self, which is the breath of God,
Or His pure Word by miracle revealed.

Rarely and with reluctance would I stoop
To transitory themes; yet I rejoice,
And, by these thoughts admonished, will pour out
Thanks with uplifted heart, that I was reared
Safe from an evil which these days have laid
Upon the children of the land, a pest
That might have dried me up, body and soul.
This verse is dedicate to Nature's self,
And things that teach as Nature teaches: then,
Oh! where had been the Man, the Poet where,
Where had we been, we two, beloved Friend!
If in the season of unperilous choice,

In lieu of wandering, as we did, through vales
Rich with indigenous produce, open ground
Of Fancy, happy pastures ranged at will,
We had been followed, hourly watched, and noosed,
Each in his several melancholy walk
Stringed like a poor man's heifer at its feed,
Led through the lanes in forlorn servitude;
Or rather like a stalled ox debarred
From touch of growing grass, that may not taste
A flower till it have yielded up its sweets
A prelibation to the mower's scythe.

. . . . . .

A gracious spirit o'er this earth presides,
And o'er the heart of man; invisibly
It comes, to works of unreproved delight,
And tendency benign, directing those
Who care not, know not, think not, what they do.
The tales that charm away the wakeful night
In Araby; romances; legends penned
For solace by dim light of monkish lamps;
Fictions, for ladies of their love, devised
By youthful squires; adventures endless, spun
By the dismantled warrior in old age,
Out of the bowels of those very schemes
In which his youth did first extravagate;
These spread like day, and something in the shape
Of these will live till man shall be no more.
Dumb yearnings, hidden appetites, are ours,
And *they must* have their food. Our childhood sits,
Our simple childhood, sits upon a throne

That hath more power than all the elements.
I guess not what this tells of Being past,
Nor what it augurs of the life to come;
But so it is; and, in that dubious hour —
That twilight — when we first begin to see
This dawning earth, to recognise, expect,
And, in the long probation that ensues,
The time of trial, ere we learn to live
In reconcilement with our stinted powers;
To endure this state of meagre vassalage,
Unwilling to forego, confess, submit,
Uneasy and unsettled, yoke-fellows
To custom, mettlesome, and not yet tamed
And humbled down — oh! then we feel, we feel,
We know where we have friends. Ye dreamers, then,
Forgers of daring tales! we bless you then,
Impostors, drivellers, dotards, as the ape
Philosophy will call you: *then* we feel
With what, and how great might ye are in league,
Who make our wish, our power, our thought a deed,
An empire, a possession, — ye whom time
And seasons serve; all Faculties to whom
Earth crouches, the elements are potter's clay,
Space like a heaven filled up with northern lights,
Here, nowhere, there, and everywhere at once.

Relinquishing this lofty eminence
For ground, though humbler, not the less a tract
Of the same isthmus, which our spirits cross
In progress from their native continent

To earth and human life, the Song might dwell
On that delightful time of growing youth,
When craving for the marvellous gives way
To strengthening love for things that we have seen;
When sober truth and steady sympathies,
Offered to notice by less daring pens,
Take firmer hold of us, and words themselves
Move us with conscious pleasure.

I am sad
At thought of rapture now for ever flown;
Almost to tears I sometimes could be sad
To think of, to read over, many a page,
Poems withal of name, which at that time
Did never fail to entrance me, and are now
Dead in my eyes, dead as a theatre
Fresh emptied of spectators. Twice five years
Or less I might have seen, when first my mind
With conscious pleasure opened to the charm
Of words in tuneful order, found them sweet
For their own *sakes*, a passion, and a power;
And phrases pleased me chosen for delight,
For pomp, or love. Oft, in the public roads
Yet unfrequented, while the morning light
Was yellowing the hill tops, I went abroad
With a dear friend, and for the better part
Of two delightful hours we strolled along
By the still borders of the misty lake,
Repeating favourite verses with one voice,
Or conning more, as happy as the birds
That round us chaunted. Well might we be glad,

Lifted above the ground by airy fancies,
More bright than madness or the dreams of wine;
And, though full oft the objects of our love
Were false, and in their splendour overwrought,
Yet was there surely then no vulgar power
Working within us, — nothing less, in truth,
Than that most noble attribute of man,
Though yet untutored and inordinate,
That wish for something loftier, more adorned,
Than is the common aspect, daily garb,
Of human life. What wonder, then, if sounds
Of exultation echoed through the groves!
For, images, and sentiments, and words,
And everything encountered or pursued
In that delicious world of poesy,
Kept holiday, a never-ending show,
With music, incense, festival, and flowers!

Here must we pause: this only let me add,
From heart-experience, and in humblest sense
Of modesty, that he, who in his youth
A daily wanderer among woods and fields
With living Nature hath been intimate,
Not only in that raw unpractised time
Is stirred to ecstasy, as others are,
By glittering verse; but further, doth receive,
In measure only dealt out to himself,
Knowledge and increase of enduring joy
From the great Nature that exists in works
Of mighty Poets. Visionary power

"I loved the sun

. . . . . .

. . . for this cause, that I had seen him lay
His beauty on the morning hills, had seen
The western mountain touch his setting orb."

—**The Prelude, Book ii, p. 37.**

Attends the motions of the viewless winds,
Embodied in the mystery of words:
There, darkness makes abode, and all the host
Of shadowy things work endless changes, — there,
As in a mansion like their proper home,
Even forms and substances are circumfused
By that transparent veil with light divine,
And, through the turnings intricate of verse,
Present themselves as objects recognised,
In flashes, and with glory not their own.

FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO MISS POLLARD (NOW MRS. MARSHALL)

MILLHOUSE, September 2, 1795.

. . . . . .

I am going to live in Dorsetshire. . . . You know the pleasure I have always attached to the idea of home, a blessing which I have so early lost. . . . I think I told you that Mr Montagu had a little boy, who, as you will perceive, could not be very well taken care of, either in his father's chambers, or under the uncertain management of various friends of Mr M., with whom he has frequently stayed. . . . A daughter of Mr Tom Myers (a cousin of mine whom I daresay you have heard me mention) is coming over to England by the first ship, which is expected in about a week, to be educated. She is, I believe, about three or four years old, and T. Myers' brother, who has charge of her, has suggested that I should take her under my care. With these two children, and the produce of

Raisley Calvert's legacy, we shall have an income of at least £70 or £80 per annum. William finds that he can get nine per cent. for the money upon the best security. He means to sink half of it upon my life, which will make me always comfortable and independent. . . . Living in the unsettled way in which my brother has hitherto lived in London is altogether unfavourable to mental exertion. . . . He has had the offer of ten guineas for a work which has not taken up much time, and half the profits of a second edition if it should be called for. It is a little sum; but it is one step. . . . I am determined to work with resolution. It will greatly contribute to my happiness, and place me in such a situation that I shall be doing something. . . . I shall have to join William at Bristol, and proceed thence in a chaise with Basil[1] to Racedown. It is fifty miles.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

[1] Basil Montagu, the "little boy" mentioned above.

THE YEARS 1795 TO 1800

RACEDOWN : ALFOXDEN

INTRODUCTORY

DURING these years of storm and stress, when so few heard Wordsworth's voice aright, there was one man, Raisley Calvert, who recognized its power and resolved that it should have a chance to utter itself. On his death in 1795 it was found that he had left to Wordsworth a legacy of nine hundred pounds. Small as the sum seems, it was enough to justify his long-deferred dream of making a home for himself and his sister; for the first time liberty and leisure were at his command. Now began that life of plain living and high thinking, so congenial to the Wordsworths that they never afterwards departed greatly from it.

It was almost an accident that determined their particular location. A local merchant of Bristol, Mr. Pinney, had a country house at Racedown, Dorsetshire, which he had given over to his son and which the son in turn now gave over to Wordsworth, with furniture, orchard, and gardens, free of rent, on condition that the young man might occasionally come down for a few weeks at a time. The garden, cultivated by

Wordsworth himself, supplied the principal food of the family, while £50 a year received for the board and teaching of the son of a London barrister supplemented the slender income. Here Wordsworth wrote "Guilt and Sorrow," "The Borderers" and a number of short poems. It was a happy time for the long-separated brother and sister, and years afterward Dorothy wrote of it as "the place dearest to my recollections upon the whole surface of the island, the first home *I ever had." But there are few traces of locality in the poems, beyond the description of the ruined cottage, and the general scenery of Book I of "The Excursion." Dorsetshire downs rise plainly to the eye when we read:*

> *"'T was summer, and the sun had mounted high;*
> *Southward the landscape indistinctly glared*
> *Through a pale stream; but all the northern downs*
> *In clearest air ascending, showed far off*
> *A surface dappled o'er with shadows flung*
> *From brooding clouds."*

The real epoch-making event of these two years in Dorsetshire occurred when Coleridge came down from Bristol to visit them, in June, 1797. Wordsworth read to Coleridge "The Borderers," and Coleridge read to Wordsworth "Orsorio, a Tragedy," and they walked and talked and sat up far into the night in order to have more time for talk, and thus began the friendship which later meant so much in both lives. Brother and sister returned the visit in the following month at Coleridge's home in Nether-Stowey, among the

ON the road to "The Valley of Stones," — the walking trip on which "Lyrical Ballads" was planned by Wordsworth and Coleridge.

"Thou in bewitching words, with happy heart,
Didst chaunt the vision of that Ancient Man,
The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes
Didst utter of the Lady Christabel."

— The Prelude, Book xiv, p. 116.

Quantock Hills, Somersetshire. Dorothy's feeling about this region and this visit is thus recorded: "There is everything here; sea, woods, wild as fancy ever painted, brooks clear and pebbly as in Cumberland, villages so romantic; and William and I, in a wander by ourselves, found out a sequestered waterfall in a dell formed by steep hills covered with full-grown timber trees. The woods are as fine as those of Lowther, and the country more romantic." To live in so charming a country and at the same time to have Coleridge as a neighbor appealed to both guests as so highly desirable that they seem not even to have returned to the Dorsetshire farm. It happened that a fine old mansion house known as Alfoxden (now commonly called Alfoxton), just beyond the glen described by Dorothy, was for rent. Seeing this beautiful country residence to-day with its fine appointments, stables, gardens, etc.; its stately approach bordered with magnificent beeches and elms and set in its background of park, hill-side, and holly-grove, one is amazed at the thought of so much luxury as possible to the impecunious Wordsworths. Doubtless the place was less imposing then, and, the owner being in his minority, it was offered at the ridiculously paltry sum of £23 per year. Never, perhaps, were Arcadia and Academus combined at so small an outlay. Here were written many of Wordsworth's most charming minor poems, and here, conjointly with Coleridge, was planned and executed that book so ridiculed at the time, but since

recognized as one of the most epoch-making in the whole history of poetry —" Lyrical Ballads."

It is quite a sore point with the Somerset folk to-day that Wordsworth did not make their region famous, as he has the Lake Country, by localizing the places and incidents which served him for inspiration. For example, " Lines written in Early Spring," " A Whirl-Blast from behind the Hill," " To My Sister," " Ruth," etc., are full of the Somerset scenery and atmosphere for those who know the Quantock Hills. One passage in " The Prelude" (p. 116) does indeed celebrate the wonderful walking-trip made by the two poets (with Dorothy keeping step both physically and poetically) over the hills to Watchet and thence to the Valley of Rocks near Lynton;

> *"That summer, under whose indulgent skies,*
> *Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved*
> *Unchecked, or loitered 'mid her sylvan combs."*

Wordsworth always looked back upon these Alfoxden days with keenest pleasure. And well he might, since seldom has been known a group of choicer spirits than those who came and went or stayed in this little corner of Somerset in the closing years of the eighteenth century. Charles Lamb, seeking this retreat after the great sorrow which always continued to overshadow his life; Charles Lloyd, the son of a rich Birmingham banker, rejecting a life of pleasure to devote himself to poetry and the pursuit of truth; John Thelwell, the intrepid democrat from London; Thomas

Cottle, poet and publisher, who came from Bristol to hear the poets read their verses, and afterwards published them to his own great loss; Thomas Poole, a Somerset farmer of plain exterior, but a wonderful example of the thoroughly developed man, and the magnet that had at first attracted Coleridge, and through him the rest of this brilliant group. So sincere and intimate was the daily companionship of Wordsworth, Dorothy, and Coleridge that Coleridge said "We are three people but only one soul."

Yet one must beware of thinking that this unity of understanding meant any weak yielding of individualities. A sympathetic writer[1] *has stated the case truly: — "No two men could be more unlike than the two poets who now met beside the Quantocks. Coleridge, a student and recluse from his boyhood, of immense erudition, all his life a valetudinarian, who scarcely knew what health was, ever planning mighty works, yet so irresolute and infirm of purpose as never to realize his aspirations, the very* Hamlet *of literature; Wordsworth, on the other hand, — as robust in body as one of the peasants of his native Cumberland, of indomitable purpose, keeping his way right onward when made the scorn of fools, till he became the glory of his age — was no reader of books, except of the great book of Nature, and his study was on the Quantock downs."*

[1] Rev. W. L. Nichols.

The Wordsworth residence at Alfoxden lasted only about one year. As a tenant, he was regarded with suspicion, not only because of his habit of wandering round and muttering to himself, but because he was so continually surrounded by groups of persons who talked of queer and mysterious things. The trustees of the property terminated the lease, and in June, 1798, the Wordsworths left Alfoxden, spending one week with Coleridge in Nether-Stowey, another in Bristol with the publisher Cottle, arranging details for the forthcoming "Lyrical Ballads." They then started for that ramble along the Wye in which the "Lines on Tintern Abbey" took shape, and of which Wordsworth said: "No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol."

In September, the trio of friends decided to spend the Winter in Germany. The object of Coleridge was to learn the German language; of Wordsworth to study natural history. His interest in science, at this time, seems to have been very great, and to have continued for several years. He was one of the first to foresee what has since come to pass, — the time when "what is now called science shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood."

The poems written during the stay of about five months in Germany show that his thoughts often turned to his native land. But perhaps the most significant event was that here he resolved to make a searching review of his mental history from his youth to the present moment, in order to determine whether he was fitted to devote himself to poetry. The poem now begun was not published until the year after his death, when it was brought out by Mrs. Wordsworth and named by her "The Prelude." His reasons should silence those who criticise it as the work of a self-conceited man:—

> *"my hope has been that I might fetch*
> *Invigorating thoughts from former years;*
> *Might fix the wavering balance of my mind*
> *And haply meet reproaches too, whose power*
> *May spur me on, in manhood now mature,*
> *To honourable toil."*

WORDSWORTH'S House, near Holford, Somerset.

TO THE MEMORY OF RAISLEY CALVERT[1]

Calvert! it must not be unheard by them
Who may respect my name, that I to thee
Owed many years of early liberty.
This care was thine when sickness did condemn
Thy youth to hopeless wasting, root and stem —
That I, if frugal and severe, might stray
Where'er I liked; and finally array
My temples with the Muse's diadem.
Hence, if in freedom I have loved the truth;
If there be aught of pure, or good, or great
In my past verse; or shall be, in the lays
Of higher mood, which now I meditate; —
It gladdens me, O worthy, short-lived Youth!
To think how much of this will be thy praise.

FROM "THE PRELUDE," BOOK XI

[THE POET'S TRIBUTE TO HIS SISTER]

. . . . . .

Somewhat stern
In temperament, withal a happy man,
And therefore bold to look on painful things,
Free likewise of the world, and thence more bold,
I summoned my best skill, and toiled, intent
To anatomise the frame of social life;
Yea, the whole body of society

[1] Calvert died in 1795; sonnet composed in 1806.

Searched to its heart. Share with me, Friend! the wish
That some dramatic tale, endued with shapes
Livelier, and flinging out less guarded words
Than suit the work we fashion, might set forth
What then I learned, or think I learned, of truth,
And the errors into which I fell, betrayed
By present objects, and by reasonings false
From their beginnings, inasmuch as drawn
Out of a heart that had been turned aside
From Nature's way by outward accidents,
And which was thus confounded, more and more
Misguided, and misguiding. So I fared,
Dragging all precepts, judgments, maxims, creeds,
Like culprits to the bar; calling the mind,
Suspiciously, to establish in plain day
Her titles and her honours; now believing,
Now disbelieving; endlessly perplexed
With impulse, motive, right and wrong, the ground
Of obligation, what the rule and whence
The sanction; till, demanding formal *proof*,
And seeking it in every thing, I lost
All feeling of conviction, and, in fine,
Sick, wearied out with contrarieties,
Yielded up moral questions in despair.

This was the crisis of that strong disease,
This the soul's last and lowest ebb; I drooped,
Deeming our blessèd reason of least use
Where wanted most: "The lordly attributes
Of will and choice," I bitterly exclaimed,

"What are they but a mockery of a Being
Who hath in no concerns of his a test
Of good and evil; knows not what to fear
Or hope for, what to covet or to shun;
And who, if those could be discerned, would yet
Be little profited, would see, and ask
Where is the obligation to enforce?
And, to acknowledged law rebellious, still,
As selfish passion urged, would act amiss;
The dupe of folly, or the slave of crime."

Depressed, bewildered thus, I did not walk
With scoffers, seeking light and gay revenge
From indiscriminate laughter, nor sate down
In reconcilement with an utter waste
Of intellect; such sloth I could not brook,
(Too well I loved, in that my spring of life,
Pains-taking thoughts, and truth, their dear reward)
But turned to abstract science, and there sought
Work for the reasoning faculty enthroned
Where the disturbances of space and time —
Whether in matters various, properties
Inherent, or from human will and power
Derived — find no admission. Then it was —
Thanks to the bounteous Giver of all good! —
That the belovèd Sister in whose sight
Those days were passed, now speaking in a voice
Of sudden admonition — like a brook
That did but *cross* a lonely road, and now
Is seen, heard, felt, and caught at every turn,

Companion never lost through many a league —
Maintained for me a saving intercourse
With my true self; for, though bedimmed and changed
Much, as it seemed, I was no further changed
Than as a clouded and a waning moon:
She whispered still that brightness would return;
She, in the midst of all, preserved me still
A Poet, made me seek beneath that name,
And that alone, my office upon earth;
And, lastly, as hereafter will be shown,
If willing audience fail not, Nature's self,
By all varieties of human love
Assisted, led me back through opening day
To those sweet counsels between head and heart
Whence grew that genuine knowledge, fraught with peace,
Which, through the later sinkings of this cause,
Hath still upheld me, and upholds me now
In the catastrophe (for so they dream,
And nothing less), when, finally to close
And seal up all the gains of France, a Pope
Is summoned in, to crown an Emperor [1] —
This last opprobrium, when we see a people,
That once looked up in faith, as if to Heaven
For manna, take a lesson from the dog
Returning to his vomit; when the sun
That rose in splendour, was alive, and moved
In exultation with a living pomp
Of clouds — his glory's natural retinue —

[1] Buonaparte summoned the Pope to anoint him Emperor of France in 1804.

PORTRAIT of Dorothy Wordsworth at the age of sixty-two.

"She, in the midst of all, preserved me still
A Poet, made me seek beneath that name,
And that alone, my office upon earth."

—The Prelude, Book xi, p. 86.

Hath dropped all functions by the gods bestowed,
And, turned into a gewgaw, a machine,
Sets like an Opera phantom.
Thus, O Friend!
Through times of honour and through times of shame
Descending, have I faithfully retraced
The perturbations of a youthful mind
Under a long-lived storm of great events —
A story destined for thy ear, who now,
Among the fallen of nations, dost abide
Where Etna, over hill and valley, casts
His shadow stretching towards Syracuse,[1]
The city of Timoleon! Righteous Heaven!
How are the mighty prostrated! They first,
They first of all that breathe should have awaked
When the great voice was heard from out the tombs
Of ancient heroes. If I suffered grief
For ill-requited France, by many deemed
A trifler only in her proudest day;
Have been distressed to think of what she once
Promised, now is; a far more sober cause
Thine eyes must see of sorrow in a land,
To the reanimating influence lost
Of memory, to virtue lost and hope,
Though with the wreck of loftier years bestrewn.

But indignation works where hope is not,
And thou, O Friend! wilt be refreshed.

[1] Coleridge was now in Sicily. Timoleon, after reducing Sicily to order, refused all titles and lived as a private citizen.

There is
One great society alone on earth:
The noble Living and the noble Dead.

TO FRANCIS WRANGHAM[1]

Racedown, November 20th, 1795.

. . . I have a poem[2] which I should wish to dispose of, provided I should get anything for it. Its object is partly to expose the vices of the penal law, and the calamities of war as they affect individuals. . . . As to your promoting my interest in the way of pupils, upon a review of my own attainments, I think there is so little that I am able to teach that this may be suffered to fly quietly away to the paradise of fools. . . . The copy of the poem[3] you will contrive to frank, else ten to one I shall not be able to release it from the post-office. I have lately been living upon air and the essence of carrots, cabbages, turnips, and other esculent vegetables, not excluding parsley, — the produce of my garden.

FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO MRS. MARSHALL

Racedown, November 30th, 1795.

. . . We walk about two hours every morning. We have very pleasant walks about us; and what is a great advantage, the roads are of a sandy kind, and are almost

[1] A fellow-student at Cambridge; later Archdeacon of Chester.

[2] "Guilt and Sorrow."

[3] "Juvenal's Satires"; Wordsworth had planned to write some imitations of Juvenal, for a volume of satirical pieces to be written jointly with Wrangham. The scheme was abandoned later.

always dry. We can see the sea, 150 or 200 yards from the door; and at a little distance we have a very extensive view terminated by the sea, seen through different openings of the unequal hills. We have not the warmth and luxuriance of Devonshire, though there is no want either of wood, or of cultivation; but the trees appear to suffer from the sea-blasts. We have hills which, seen from a distance, almost take the character of mountains, some cultivated nearly to their summits; others in their wild state, covered with furze and broom. These delight me most, as they remind me of our native wilds. Our common parlour is the prettiest little room that can be. . . .

FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO A FRIEND, AFTER A VISIT AT RACEDOWN

RACEDOWN, 1797.

. . . You had a great loss in not seeing Coleridge. He is a wonderful man. His conversation teems with soul, mind, and spirit. Then he is so benevolent, so good-tempered and cheerful, and, like William, interests himself so much about every little trifle. At first I thought him very plain, that is, for about three minutes. He is pale, thin, has a wide mouth, thick lips, and not very good teeth, longish, loose-growing, half-curling, rough, black hair. But if you hear him speak for five minutes you think no more of them. His eye is large and full, and not very dark, but grey, such an eye as would receive from a heavy soul the dullest expression; but it speaks every emotion of his animated mind: it has more of "the poet's eye in a

fine frenzy rolling" than I ever witnessed. He has fine dark eyebrows, and an overhanging forehead.

The first thing that was read after he came was William's new poem, "The Ruined Cottage,"[1] with which he was much delighted; and after tea he repeated to us two acts and a half of his tragedy, "Osorio." The next morning William read his tragedy, "The Borderers."

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

I HEARD a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 't is my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure: —
But the least motion which they made
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

[1] Afterwards incorporated into "The Excursion," Book I, where it is told by The Wanderer.

WORDSWORTH'S Glen at Alfoxden.

"*I heard a thousand blended notes,*
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind."

— Lines written in Early Spring, p. 90.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

TO MY SISTER

It is the first mild day of March:
Each minute sweeter than before
The redbreast sings from the tall larch
That stands beside our door.

There is a blessing in the air,
Which seems a sense of joy to yield
To the bare trees, and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.

My sister! ('t is a wish of mine)
Now that our morning meal is done,
Make haste, your morning task resign;
Come forth and feel the sun.

Edward will come with you; — and, pray,
Put on with speed your woodland dress;
And bring no book: for this one day
We 'll give to idleness.

No joyless forms shall regulate
Our living calendar:
We from to-day, my Friend, will date
The opening of the year.

Love, now a universal birth,
From heart to heart is stealing,
From earth to man, from man to earth:
— It is the hour of feeling.

One moment now may give us more
Than years of toiling reason:
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts will make,
Which they shall long obey:
We for the year to come may take
Our temper from to-day.

And from the blessed power that rolls
About, below, above,
We 'll frame the measure of our souls:
They shall be tuned to love.

Then come, my Sister! come, I pray,
With speed put on your woodland dress;
And bring no book: for this one day
We 'll give to idleness.

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY

"Why, William, on that old grey stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?

"Where are your books? — that light bequeathed
To Beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

"You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!"

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply:

"The eye — it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel where'er they be,
Against or with our will.

"Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

"— Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away."

THE TABLES TURNED

[AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT]

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books;
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 't is a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There 's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

THE Valley of Rocks near Lynton.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless —
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

FROM "PETER BELL"

. . . . . .

He roved among the vales and streams,
In the green wood and hollow dell;
They were his dwellings night and day, —
But nature ne'er could find the way
Into the heart of Peter Bell.

In vain, through every changeful year,
Did Nature lead him as before;
A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.

Small change it made on Peter's heart
To see his gentle panniered train
With more than vernal pleasure feeding,
Where'er the tender grass was leading
Its earliest green along the lane.

In vain, through water, earth, and air,
The soul of happy sound was spread,
When Peter on some April morn,
Beneath the broom or budding thorn,
Made the warm earth his lazy bed.

At noon, when, by the forest's edge
He lay beneath the branches high,
The soft blue sky did never melt
Into his heart; he never felt
The witchery of the soft blue sky!

On a fair prospect some have looked
And felt, as I have heard them say,
As if the moving time had been
A thing as steadfast as the scene
On which they gazed themselves away.

Within the breast of Peter Bell
These silent raptures found no place;
He was a Carl as wild and rude
As ever hue-and-cry pursued,
As ever ran a felon's race.

. . . .

Though Nature could not touch his heart
By lovely forms, and silent weather,
And tender sounds, yet you might see
At once, that Peter Bell and she
Had often been together.

A savage wildness round him hung
As of a dweller out of doors;
In his whole figure and his mien
A savage character was seen
Of mountains and of dreary moors.

To all the unshaped half-human thoughts
Which solitary Nature feeds
'Mid summer storms or winter's ice,
Had Peter joined whatever vice
The cruel city breeds.

His face was keen as is the wind
That cuts along the hawthorn-fence; —
Of courage you saw little there,
But, in its stead, a medley air
Of cunning and of impudence.

He had a dark and sidelong walk,
And long and slouching was his gait;
Beneath his looks so bare and bold,
You might perceive, his spirit cold
Was playing with some inward bait.

His forehead wrinkled was and furred;
A work, one half of which was done
By thinking of his "*whens*" and "*hows*";
And half, by knitting of his brows
Beneath the glaring sun.

There was a hardness in his cheek,
There was a hardness in his eye,
As if the man had fixed his face,
In many a solitary place,
Against the wind and open sky!

. . . . .

And now is Peter taught to feel
That man's heart is a holy thing;
And Nature through a world of death
Breathes into him a second breath,
More searching than the breath of spring.

"THERE WAS A BOY"

THERE was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander! — many a time,
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,

A Village Road in Devonshire.

"When thou dost to that summer turn thy thoughts,
And hast before thee all which then we were,

. . . . . .

To thee the work shall justify itself."

—The Prelude, Book xiv, p. 116.

Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake;
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him. — And they would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call, — with quivering peals,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled; concourse wild
Of jocund din! And, when there came a pause
Of silence such as baffled his best skill:
Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain-torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.[1]
This boy was taken from his mates, and died
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
Pre-eminent in beauty is the vale
Where he was born and bred: the church-yard hangs
Upon a slope above the village-school; [2]

[1] Of these lines, Coleridge wrote: "I should have recognized them anywhere; had I met them running wild in the deserts of Arabia I should have instantly screamed out, 'Wordsworth!'"

[2] Hawkshead.

And, through that church-yard when my way has led
On summer-evenings, I believe, that there
A long half-hour together I have stood
Mute — looking at the grave in which he lies!

A POET'S EPITAPH

Art thou a Statist in the van
Of public conflicts trained and bred?
— First learn to love one living man;
Then may'st thou think upon the dead.

A Lawyer art thou? — draw not nigh!
Go, carry to some fitter place
The keenness of that practised eye,
The hardness of that sallow face.

Art thou a Man of purple cheer?
A rosy Man, right plump to see?
Approach; yet, Doctor, not too near,
This grave no cushion is for thee.

Or art thou one of gallant pride,
A Soldier and no man of chaff?
Welcome! — but lay thy sword aside,
And lean upon a peasant's staff.

Physician art thou? one, all eyes,
Philosopher! a fingering slave,
One that would peep and botanise
Upon his mother's grave?

Wrapt closely in thy sensual fleece,
O turn aside, — and take, I pray,
That he below may rest in peace,
Thy ever-dwindling soul, away!

A Moralist perchance appears;
Led, Heaven knows how! to this poor sod:
And he has neither eyes nor ears;
Himself his world, and his own God;

One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling
Nor form, nor feeling, great or small;
A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,
An intellectual All-in-all!

Shut close the door; press down the latch;
Sleep in thy intellectual crust;
Nor lose ten tickings of thy watch
Near this unprofitable dust.

But who is He, with modest looks,
And clad in homely russet brown?
He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.

He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noon-day grove;
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

The outward shows of sky and earth,
Of hill and valley, he has viewed;
And impulses of deeper birth
Have come to him in solitude.

In common things that round us lie
Some random truths he can impart, —
The harvest of a quiet eye
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

But he is weak; both Man and Boy,
Hath been an idler in the land;
Contented if he might enjoy
The things which others understand.

— Come hither in thy hour of strength;
Come, weak as is a breaking wave!
Here stretch thy body at full length;
Or build thy house upon this grave.

TINTERN Abbey from Chepstow Road.

"Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion."

— Lines composed near Tintern Abbey, p. 103.

LINES [1]

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR. JULY 13, 1798.

FIVE years have past; five summers, with the length [2]
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur. — Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!

[1] No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days, with my Sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol. (Wordsworth's Note.)

[2] Wordsworth's first visit to the Wye was made alone, on a walking tour, in the Summer of 1793.

With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.
These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration: — feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened: — that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on, —
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power

Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet oh! how oft —
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart —
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!
And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.— I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract

Haunted me like a passion : the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.— That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear, — both what they half create,

TINTERN Abbey. The Nave from the West.

"Through a long absence, ...
. . . . . I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart."

— Lines composed near Tintern Abbey, p. 104

And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.
Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 't is her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;

And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance —
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence — wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love — oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

FROM "THE OLD CUMBERLAND BEGGAR"

. . . . . .

— Many, I believe, there are
Who live a life of virtuous decency,
Men who can hear the Decalogue and feel

No self-reproach; who of the moral law
Established in the land where they abide
Are strict observers; and not negligent
In acts of love to those with whom they dwell,
Their kindred, and the children of their blood.
Praise be to such, and to their slumbers peace!
— But of the poor man ask, the abject poor;
Go, and demand of him, if there be here
In this cold abstinence from evil deeds,
And these inevitable charities,
Wherewith to satisfy the human soul?
No — man is dear to man; the poorest poor
Long for some moments in a weary life
When they can know and feel that they have been,
Themselves, the fathers and the dealers-out
Of some small blessings; have been kind to such
As needed kindness, for this single cause,
That we have all of us one human heart.
— Such pleasure is to one kind Being known,
My neighbour, when with punctual care, each week
Duly as Friday comes, though pressed herself
By her own wants, she from her store of meal
Takes one unsparing handful for the scrip
Of this old Mendicant, and, from her door
Returning with exhilarated heart,
Sits by her fire, and builds her hope in heaven.
Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
And while in that vast solitude to which
The tide of things has borne him, he appears
To breathe and live but for himself alone,

Unblamed, uninjured, let him bear about
The good which the benignant law of Heaven
Has hung around him: and, while life is his,
Still let him prompt the unlettered villagers
To tender offices and pensive thoughts.
— Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
And, long as he can wander, let him breathe
The freshness of the valleys; let his blood
Struggle with frosty air and winter snows;
And let the chartered wind that sweeps the heath
Beat his grey locks against his withered face.
Reverence the hope whose vital anxiousness
Gives the last human interest to his heart.
May never HOUSE, misnamed of INDUSTRY,
Make him a captive! — for that pent-up din,
Those life-consuming sounds that clog the air,
Be his the natural silence of old age!
Let him be free of mountain solitudes;
And have around him, whether heard or not,
The pleasant melody of woodland birds.

FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO MRS. MARSHALL

ALFOXDEN, NEAR NETHER-STOWEY, SOMERSETSHIRE,
August 14, 1797.

Here we are in a large mansion, in a large park, with seventy head of deer around us. But I must begin with the day of leaving Racedown to pay Coleridge a visit. You know how much we were delighted with the neigh-

"Wherever we turn we have woods, smooth downs, and valleys with small brooks running down them, through green meadows, hardly ever intersected with hedgerows, but scattered over with trees."

— Dorothy's Letter, p. 112.

bourhood of Stowey. . . . The evening that I wrote to you,[1] William and I had rambled as far as this house, and pryed into the recesses of our little brook, but without any more fixed thoughts upon it than some dreams of happiness in a little cottage, and passing wishes that such a place might be found out. We spent a fortnight at Coleridge's: in the course of that time we heard that this house was to let, applied for it, and took it. Our principal inducement was Coleridge's society. It was a month yesterday since we came to Alfoxden.

The house is a large mansion, with furniture enough for a dozen families like ours. There is a very excellent garden, well stocked with vegetables and fruit. The garden is at the end of the house, and our favourite parlour, as at Racedown, looks that way. In front is a little court, with grass plot, gravel walk, and shrubs; the moss roses were in full beauty a month ago. The front of the house is to the south, but it is screened from the sun by a high hill which rises immediately from it. This hill is beautiful, scattered irregularly and abundantly with trees, and topped with fern, which spreads a considerable way down it. The deer dwell here, and sheep, so that we have a living prospect. From the end of the house we have a view of the sea, over a woody meadow-country; and exactly opposite the window where I now sit is an immense wood, whose round top from this point has exactly the appearance of a mighty dome. In some parts of this wood there is an under grove of hollies which are now very beautiful. In a glen at the bottom of the wood is the

[1] July fourth.

waterfall of which I spoke, a quarter of a mile from the house. We are three miles from Stowey, and not two miles from the sea. Wherever we turn we have woods, smooth downs, and valleys with small brooks running down them, through green meadows, hardly ever intersected with hedgerows, but scattered over with trees. The hills that cradle these valleys are either covered with fern and bilberries, or oak woods, which are cut for charcoal. . . . Walks extend for miles over the hill-tops; the great beauty of which is their wild simplicity: they are perfectly smooth, without rocks.

The Tor of Glastonbury is before our eyes during more than half of our walk to Stowey; and in the park wherever we go, keeping about fifteen yards above the house, it makes a part of our prospect.

TO JAMES LOSH

My dear Losh, — I have wished much to hear from you. I suppose that your marriage has not yet taken place, or I should certainly have been apprised of it. I have had some fears about your health, but I have constantly banished them as soon as they came into my mind. Perhaps you have heard of the unexampled liberality of the Wedgwoods towards Coleridge; they have settled an annuity of £150 upon him, for life. We are obliged to quit this place at midsummer. I have already spoken to you of its enchanting beauty. Do contrive to come and see us before we go away. Coleridge is now writing by me at the same table. I need not say how ardently he

joins with me in this wish, and how deeply interested he is in anything relating to you.

We have a delightful scheme in agitation, which is rendered still more delightful by a probability which I cannot exclude from my mind that you may be induced to join in the party. We have come to a resolution — Coleridge, Mrs Coleridge, my sister, and myself — of going into Germany, where we purpose to pass the two ensuing years in order to acquire the German language, and to furnish ourselves with a tolerable stock of information in natural science. Our plan is to settle if possible in a village near a University, in a pleasant, and, if we can, a mountainous country. It will be desirable that the place should be as near as may be to Hamburgh, on account of the expense of travelling. What do you say to this? I know that Cecilia Baldwin has great activity and spirit; may I venture to whisper a wish to her that she would consent to join this little colony? I have not forgotten your apprehensions from sea-sickness; there may be many other obstacles which I cannot divine. I cannot, however, suppress wishes which I have so ardently felt. Where is Tweddel? Will you have the goodness to write to him, and to request that he would inform you what places he has seen in Germany, which he thinks eligible residences for persons with such views, either for accidental or permanent advantages; also, if he could give any information respecting the prices of board, lodging, house rents, provisions, &c., upon which we should be justified in proceeding, it would be highly useful.

I have not yet seen any numbers of the *Economist*, though I requested Cottle to transmit them to me. I have

been tolerably industrious within the last few weeks. I have written 706 lines of a poem which I hope to make of considerable utility. Its title will be, The Recluse, or Views of Nature, Man, and Society. Let me hear from you immediately. My sister begs her kind remembrances. — I am, dear Losh, your affectionate friend,

W. Wordsworth.

Alfoxden, near Stowey-Bridgewater,
Somersetshire, March 11 [1798].

TO THOMAS COTTLE [1]

Sockburn, 27th July [Postmark 1799].

My dear Cottle, — I thank you for your draft, which I received on Friday evening. . . . I am not poor enough yet to make me think it right that I should take interest for a debt from a friend, paid eleven months after it is due. If I were in want, I should make no scruple in applying to you for twice that sum. I should be very glad to hear so good an account of the sale of the *Lyrical Ballads,* if I were not afraid that your wish to give pleasure, and your proneness to self-deception, had made you judge too favourably. I am told they have been reviewed in *The Monthly Review,* but I have not heard in what style. . . . God bless you, my dear Cottle. — Believe me, your very affectionate friend,

W. Wordsworth.

P. S. — . . . My aversion from publication increases every day, so much so, that no motives whatever, nothing

[1] Publisher of "Lyrical Ballads," Bristol, 1798.

A Village Road in Somersetshire.

"That summer, under whose indulgent skies,
Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved
Unchecked, or loitered 'mid her sylvan combs."

—The Prelude, Book xiv, p. 116.

but pecuniary necessity, will, I think, ever prevail upon me to commit myself to the press again. . . .

TO THOMAS COTTLE

Sockburn, 1799.

My dear Cottle, — . . . Southey's review I have seen. He knew that I published those poems for money and money alone. He knew that money was of importance to me. If he could not conscientiously have spoken differently of the volume, he ought to have declined the task of reviewing it.

The bulk of the poems he has described as destitute of merit.[1] Am I recompensed for this by vague praises of my talents? I care little for the praise of any other professional critic, but as it may help me to pudding. . . . — Believe me, dear Cottle, your affectionate friend,

W. Wordsworth.

FROM "THE PRELUDE," BOOK XIV

[alfoxden days with s. t. coleridge]

Whether to me shall be allotted life,
And, with life, power to accomplish aught of worth,
That will be deemed no insufficient plea
For having given the story of myself,
Is all uncertain: but, beloved Friend!

[1] Southey's admiration for Wordsworth later became thoroughly enthusiastic. An unbroken friendship of many years was established between them soon after the date of this letter.

When, looking back, thou seest, in clearer view
Than any liveliest sight of yesterday,
That summer, under whose indulgent skies,
Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved
Unchecked, or loitered 'mid her sylvan combs,
Thou in bewitching words, with happy heart,
Didst chaunt the vision of that Ancient Man,
The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes
Didst utter of the Lady Christabel;
And I, associate with such labour, steeped
In soft forgetfulness the livelong hours,
Murmuring of him who, joyous hap, was found,
After the perils of his moonlight ride,
Near the loud waterfall; or her who sate
In misery near the miserable Thorn —[1]
When thou dost to that summer turn thy thoughts,
And hast before thee all which then we were,
To thee, in memory of that happiness,
It will be known, by thee at least, my Friend!
Felt, that the history of a Poet's mind
Is labour not unworthy of regard;
To thee the work shall justify itself.[2]

The last and later portions of this gift
Have been prepared, not with the buoyant spirits
That were our daily portion when we first

1 "The Idiot Boy" and "The Thorn."

2 Coleridge's admiration for Wordsworth often expressed itself with over extravagance, as when he said: "I feel myself a better poet in knowing how to honour *him* than in all my own poetic compositions, all I have done or hope to do."

Together wantoned in wild Poesy,
But, under pressure of a private grief,[1]
Keen and enduring, which the mind and heart,
That in this meditative history
Have been laid open, needs must make me feel
More deeply, yet enable me to bear
More firmly; and a comfort now hath risen
From hope that thou art near, and wilt be soon
Restored to us in renovated health;
When, after the first mingling of our tears,
'Mong other consolations, we may draw
Some pleasure from this offering of my love.

Oh! yet a few short years of useful life,
And all will be complete, thy race be run,
Thy monument of glory will be raised;
Then, though (too weak to tread the ways of truth)
This age fall back to old idolatry,
Though men return to servitude as fast
As the tide ebbs, to ignominy and shame,
By nations, sink together, we shall still
Find solace — knowing what we have learnt to know,
Rich in true happiness if allowed to be
Faithful alike in forwarding a day
Of firmer trust, joint labourers in the work
(Should Providence such grace to us vouchsafe)
Of their deliverance, surely yet to come.
Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak

[1] The death by shipwreck of his brother John. See Letter to Sir George Beaumont, p. 170.

A lasting inspiration, sanctified
By reason, blest by faith: what we have loved,
Others will love, and we will teach them how;
Instruct them how the mind of man becomes
A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
On which he dwells, above this frame of things
(Which, 'mid all revolution in the hopes
And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged)
In beauty exalted, as it is itself
Of quality and fabric more divine.

DOVE Cottage, Wordsworth's Residence, 1799–1808.

"*Beloved Grasmere (let the wandering streams*
Take up, the cloud-capped hills repeat, the Name)
One of thy lowly dwellings is my home."

— The Recluse, p. 125.

THE YEARS 1800 TO 1813

GRASMERE

INTRODUCTORY

IN the Summer of 1799, Wordsworth and Coleridge travelled through Westmoreland and Cumberland, seeking homes where they might settle down again as neighbors. Wordsworth decided on a little cottage just out of the village of Grasmere, used as a public house and bearing the sign of "The Dove and Olive Bough." He took a lease of it, called it Dove Cottage, and in December of the same year took possession with the ever faithful Dorothy to establish the new home, and to make poetry the business of life.

Perhaps because this house has now been purchased for the nation, and, restored as nearly as possible to its former condition, is open to the public; perhaps because of the general acceptance of Matthew Arnold's too sweeping dictum that here was written all of Wordsworth's best poetry, — this is the home of all others most closely associated with the poet's memory. Here, "remote from evil-speaking," "rancour" "malignant truth, or lie" he lived for eight years, and so much of its local color has crept into his verse that, even on a first visit, one feels quite at home. The

"little nook of mountain ground," the "garden orchard," the "rocky well" with its fringe of gowan and marsh-marigold, "the bower" — make still a beautiful retreat behind the cottage; close at hand are still the "thickets full of songsters and the voice of lordly birds"; beyond are Grasmere Lake with "its one green island and its winding shores," the "Church and cottages of mountain stone," and "the multitude of little rocky hills." By a little search one finds the wishing-gate, the fir-grove of sacred memories, glow-worm rock, the leech-gatherer's pool, and their favorite walk over the hill of White Moss. But neither can we forget that these were the days when, according to De Quincey, "the finger of scorn was pointed at Mr. Wordsworth from every journal in the land." Not only were the poems an easy mark for ridicule, but to his second edition of "Lyrical Ballads" (1802) he had added the now famous "Preface" in which he boldly proclaimed what seemed to Jeffrey and the rest of his tribe the worst of all possible heresies in regard to poetic diction.

But if no man ever worked against greater odds as far as the public was concerned, yet few have ever had greater stimulus from private friendships and from the members of his own household. The wife, Mary Hutchinson, whom he married within two years after coming to Grasmere, and her sisters Sarah and Joanna, were scarcely less devoted to his service than his own sister Dorothy; Coleridge never tired of

listening, advising, praising; the sailor-brother John was truly a kindred spirit. At this time also began a very intimate and inspiring friendship with Sir George and Lady Beaumont of Leicestershire, which Wordsworth counted "among the blessings of his life." Not only were frequent visits exchanged, but it is plain from the letters that passed between them that there were few persons to whom Wordsworth expressed himself so freely and so eloquently. Sir George was a painter, and one of his pictures, "Peele Castle in a Storm," suggested the poem containing the often-quoted lines —

> *"the gleam*
> *The light that never was, on sea or land,*
> *The consecration, and the Poet's dream."*

The first collected edition of his poems was dedicated to Sir George, and it is from a letter to Lady Beaumont that we get his most explicit utterance about the mission of poetry: "To console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier; to teach the young, and the gracious of every age, to see, to think and feel, and therefore to become more actively and securely virtuous."

But the little cottage, which had been none too large in the beginning, became quite too small when the family had been increased by a wife and three children, to say nothing of relatives and guests. Even Dorothy wondered how he could accomplish so much in one room, common to all the family as well as to visitors, and with the children frequently at play beside him.

No marvel that he preferred walks among the hills when composing poetry!

But, notwithstanding all these hindrances, it was in the eight years at Dove Cottage that he wrote nearly half of "The Prelude," began "The Excursion," and completed enough short poems to make a collection of them in two volumes, introduced by a Preface of which Charles Lamb wrote: "I am hurt and vexed that you should think it necessary with a prose apology to open the eyes of dead men that cannot see."

A temporary solution of the space problem was made through the kindness of Sir George Beaumont, who lent them for one year his farmhouse at Coleorton. Other friends tried to tempt them to take up their residence on Ullswater, but they could not face the thought of leaving their beloved Grasmere. At last they secured a house at the other end of the village, still standing and known as Allan Bank. It is built on the northern flank of Silverhowe, on the way to Easedale, and on a sunny day Dorothy's description of it seems hardly exaggerated: "This place, the wood behind it and the rocks, the view of Easedale from there, the lake and church and village on the other side, is sweeter than Paradise itself." But as a winter residence it proved to have a wet cellar, smoky chimneys, and worse discomforts than the one they had left. The principal literary work at this time was "The Excursion"; but no part of it was published until later.

After three years at Allan Bank, they moved to the Parsonage, opposite the church, and enjoyed the luxury of having "at least one sitting-room clear of smoke in all winds."

However, it was here that the first real sorrow entered into the lives of this united family. Thomas and Catherine, the two younger children, died within a few months of each other, and their graves were the first to be made in that corner of the village churchyard sacred to the Wordsworth family, now daily visited by so many pilgrims from so many lands.

The poet's own record of the home at Grasmere is to be found in an autobiographical poem which he wrote at this time, but which he withheld from publication. Thirty-eight years after his death it was given to the world under the title "The Recluse."

FROM "THE RECLUSE"

[LIFE AT GRASMERE]

. . . . . .

And now 't is mine, perchance for life, dear Vale,
Beloved Grasmere, (let the wandering streams
Take up, the cloud-capped hills repeat, the Name)
One of thy lowly dwellings is my home.

. . . . . .

On Nature's invitation do I come,
By reason sanctioned. Can the choice mislead,
That made the calmest, fairest spot of earth
With all its unappropriated good
My own; and not mine only, for with me
Entrenched, say rather peacefully embowered,
Under yon orchard, in yon humble cot,
A younger Orphan of a home extinct,
The only Daughter of my Parents dwells.
Ay, think on that, my heart, and cease to stir,
Pause upon that and let the breathing frame
No longer breathe, but all be satisfied.
— Oh, if such silence be not thanks to God
For what hath been bestowed, then where, where then
Shall gratitude find rest? Mine eyes did ne'er
Fix on a lovely object, nor my mind
Take pleasure in the midst of happy thoughts,
But either She whom now I have, who now
Divides with me this loved abode, was there
Or not far off. Where'er my footsteps turned,

Her voice was like a hidden Bird that sang.
The thought of her was like a flash of light,
Or an unseen companionship, a breath
Of fragrance independent of the Wind.
In all my goings, in the new and old
Of all my meditations, and in this
Favourite of all, in this the most of all.
— What being, therefore, since the birth of Man
Had ever more abundant cause to speak
Thanks, and if favours of the Heavenly Muse
Make him more thankful, then to call on Verse
To aid him and in song resound his joy?
The boon is absolute; surpassing grace
To me hath been vouchsafed; among the bowers
Of blissful Eden this was neither given
Nor could be given, possession of the good
Which had been sighed for, ancient thought fulfilled,
And dear Imaginations realised,
Up to their highest measure, yea and more.[1]
Embrace me then, ye Hills, and close me in;
Now in the clear and open day I feel
Your guardianship; I take it to my heart;
'T is like the solemn shelter of the night.
But I would call thee beautiful, for mild,
And soft and gay, and beautiful thou art,
Dear Valley, having in thy face a smile,
Though peaceful, full of gladness. Thou art pleased,

[1] "Not Laura with Petrarch, not Beatrice with Dante are more really connected than Wordsworth with his sister Dorothy." — PAXTON HOOD.

Pleased with thy crags and woody steeps, thy Lake,
Its one green island and its winding shores;
The multitude of little rocky hills,
Thy Church and cottages of mountain stone
Clustered like stars some few, but single most,
And lurking dimly in their shy retreats,
Or glancing at each other cheerful looks
Like separated stars with clouds between.
What want we? have we not perpetual streams,
Warm woods, and sunny hills, and fresh green fields,
And mountains not less green, and flocks and herds,
And thickets full of songsters, and the voice
Of lordly birds, an unexpected sound
Heard now and then from morn to latest eve,
Admonishing the man who walks below
Of solitude and silence in the sky?
These have we, and a thousand nooks of earth
Have also these, but nowhere else is found,
Nowhere (or is it fancy?) can be found
The one sensation that is here; 't is here,
Here as it found its way into my heart
In childhood, here as it abides by day,
By night, here only; or in chosen minds
That take it with them hence, where'er they go.
— 'T is, but I cannot name it, 't is the sense
Of majesty, and beauty, and repose,
A blended holiness of earth and sky,
Something that makes this individual spot,
This small abiding-place of many men,
A termination, and a last retreat,

A centre, come from wheresoe'er you will,
A whole without dependence or defect,
Made for itself, and happy in itself,
Perfect contentment, Unity entire.
Bleak season was it, turbulent and bleak,
When hitherward we journeyed side by side
Through burst of sunshine and through flying showers
Paced the long vales — how long they were — and yet
How fast that length of way was left behind,
Wensley's rich Vale, and Sedbergh's naked heights.
The frosty wind, as if to make amends
For its keen breath, was aiding to our steps,
And drove us onward like two ships at sea,
Or like two birds, companions in mid-air,
Parted and reunited by the blast.[1]
Stern was the face of nature; we rejoiced
In that stern countenance, for our souls thence drew
A feeling of their strength. The naked trees,
The icy brooks, as on we passed, appeared
To question us. "Whence come ye, to what end?"
They seemed to say. "What would ye," said the shower,
"Wild Wanderers, whither through my dark domain?"
The sunbeam said, "Be happy." When this vale
We entered, bright and solemn was the sky
That faced us with a passionate welcoming,
And led us to our threshold. Daylight failed
Insensibly, and round us gently fell
Composing darkness, with a quiet load

[1] A prose description of the journey is given in the letter following, p. 136.

GRASMERE, from Dunmail Raise.

"Dear Valley, having in thy face a smile

. . . . . .

Pleased with thy crags and woody steeps, thy Lake,
Its one green island and its winding shores."

—The Recluse, p. 126.

Of full contentment, in a little shed
Disturbed, uneasy in itself as seemed,
And wondering at its new inhabitants.
It loves us now, this Vale so beautiful
Begins to love us! by a sullen storm,
Two months unwearied of severest storm,
It put the temper of our minds to proof,
And found us faithful through the gloom, and heard
The poet mutter his prelusive songs
With cheerful heart, an unknown voice of joy
Among the silence of the woods and hills;
Silent to any gladsomeness of sound
With all their shepherds.
But the gates of Spring
Are opened; churlish winter hath given leave
That she should entertain for this one day,
Perhaps for many genial days to come,
His guests, and make them jocund.
. . . . . .
From crowded streets remote,
Far from the living and dead wilderness
Of the thronged world, Society is here
A true Community, a genuine frame
Of many into one incorporate.
That must be looked for here, paternal sway,
One household under God for high and low,
One family, and one mansion; to themselves
Appropriate, and divided from the world
As if it were a cave, a multitude
Human and brute, possessors undisturbed

Of this recess, their legislative hall,
Their Temple, and their glorious dwelling-place.
Dismissing, therefore, all Arcadian dreams,
All golden fancies of the golden age,
The bright array of shadowy thoughts from times
That were before all time, or is it to be
Ere time expire, the pageantry that stirs,
And will be stirring when our eyes are fixed
On lovely objects, and we wish to part
With all remembrance of a jarring world,
Take we at once this one sufficient hope,
What need of more? that we shall neither droop,
Nor pine for want of pleasure in the life
Scattered about us, nor through dearth of aught
That keeps in health the insatiable mind;
That we shall have of knowledge and of love
Abundance; and that, feeling as we do
How goodly, how exceeding fair, how pure
From all reproach is yon ethereal vault,
And this deep vale its earthly counterpart,
By which, and under which, we are enclosed
To breathe in peace, we shall moreover find
(If sound, and what we ought to be ourselves,
If rightly we observe and justly weigh)
The inmates not unworthy of their home
The dwellers of their dwelling.
And if this
Were otherwise, we have within ourselves
Enough to fill the present day with joy,
And overspread the future years with hope,

Our beautiful and quiet home, enriched
Already with a stranger whom we love
Deeply, a stranger of our father's house,
A never-resting Pilgrim of the Sea,[1]
Who finds at last an hour to his content
Beneath our roof. And others whom we love
Will seek us also, sisters of our hearts,[2]
And one, like them, a brother of our hearts,
Philosopher and Poet,[3] in whose sight
These mountains will rejoice with open joy.

. . . . . .

While yet an innocent little one, with a heart
That doubtless wanted not its tender moods,
I breathed (for this I better recollect)
Among wild appetites and blind desires,
Motions of savage instinct, my delight
And exaltation. Nothing at that time
So welcome, no temptation half so dear
As that which urged me to a daring feat,
Deep pools, tall trees, black chasms, and dizzy crags,
And tottering towers: I loved to stand and read
Their looks forbidding, read and disobey,
Sometimes in act, and evermore in thought.
With impulses that scarcely were by these
Surpassed in strength, I heard of danger, met
Or sought with courage; enterprise forlorn
By one, sole keeper of his own intent,

[1] John Wordsworth.
[2] The Hutchinsons, Mrs. Wordsworth's sisters.
[3] Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Or by a resolute few who for the sake
Of glory, fronted multitudes in arms.
Yea to this hour I cannot read a tale
Of two brave vessels matched in deadly fight,
And fighting to the death, but I am pleased
More than a wise man ought to be; I wish,
Fret, burn, and struggle, and in soul am there.
But me hath Nature tamed, and bade me seek
For other agitations, or be calm;
Hath dealt with me as with a turbulent stream,
Some nursling of the mountains, which she leads
Through quiet meadows, after he has learnt
His strength, and had his triumph and his joy,
His desperate course of tumult and of glee.
That which in stealth by Nature was performed
Hath Reason sanctified. Her deliberate voice
Hath said, "Be mild, and cleave to gentle things,
Thy glory and thy happiness be there.
Nor fear, though thou confide in me, a want
Of aspirations that *have* been, of foes
To wrestle with, and victory to complete,
Bounds to be leapt, darkness to be explored,
All that inflamed thy infant heart, the love,
The longing, the contempt, the undaunted quest,
All shall survive — though changed their offices —
Shall live, it is not in their power to die."

Then farewell to the warrior's schemes, farewell
The forwardness of soul which looks that way
Upon a less incitement than the cause
Of Liberty endangered, and farewell

LIVING Room on second floor of Dove Cottage, where most of Wordsworth's indoor writing was done.

"Thus I live remote
From evil-speaking; . . . . .
Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought."

— Personal Talk, p. 196.

That other hope, long mine, the hope to fill
The heroic trumpet with the Muse's breath!
Yet in this peaceful Vale we will not spend
Unheard of days, though loving peaceful thoughts.
A voice shall speak, and what will be the theme?
  On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
Musing in solitude, I oft perceive
Fair trains of imagery before me rise,
Accompanied by feelings of delight
Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed;
And I am conscious of affecting thoughts
And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes
Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh
The good and evil of our mortal state.
— To these emotions, whencesoe'er they come,
Whether from breath of outward circumstance,
Or from the Soul — an impulse to herself —
I would give utterance in numerous verse.
Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope,
And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;
Of blessèd consolations in distress;
Of moral strength, and intellectual Power;
Of joy in widest commonalty spread;
Of the individual Mind that keeps her own
Inviolate retirement, subject there
To Conscience only, and the law supreme
Of that Intelligence which governs all —
I sing: — "fit audience let me find though few!"
  So prayed, more gaining than he asked, the Bard —
In holiest mood. Urania, I shall need

Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such
Descend to earth or dwell in highest heaven!
For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
Deep — and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil.
All strength — all terror, single or in bands,
That ever was put forth in personal form —
Jehovah — with his thunder, and the choir
Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones —
I pass them unalarmed. Not Chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
By help of dreams — can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us often when we look
Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man —
My haunt, and the main region of my song
— Beauty — a living Presence of the earth,
Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed
From earth's materials — waits upon my steps;
Pitches her tents before me as I move,
An hourly neighbour. Paradise, and groves
Elysian, Fortunate Fields — like those of old
Sought in the Atlantic Main — why should they be
A history only of departed things,
Or a mere fiction of what never was?
For the discerning intellect of Man,
When wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
A simple produce of the common day.

— I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse
Of this great consummation: — and, by words
Which speak of nothing more than what we are,
Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep
Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain
To noble raptures; while my voice proclaims
How exquisitely the individual Mind
(And the progressive powers perhaps no less
Of the whole species) to the external World
Is fitted: — and how exquisitely, too —
Theme this but little heard of among men —
The external World is fitted to the Mind;
And the creation (by no lower name
Can it be called) which they with blended might
Accomplish: — this is our high argument.
— Such grateful haunts foregoing, if I oft
Must turn elsewhere — to travel near the tribes
And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
Of madding passions mutually inflamed;
Must hear Humanity in fields and groves
Pipe solitary anguish; or must hang
Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of cities — may these sounds
Have their authentic comment; that even these
Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn! —
Descend, prophetic Spirit! that inspir'st
The human Soul of universal earth,
Dreaming on things to come; and dost possess

A metropolitan temple in the hearts
Of mighty Poets; upon me bestow
A gift of genuine insight; that my Song
With star-like virtue in its place may shine,
Shedding benignant influence, and secure
Itself from all malevolent effect
Of those mutations that extend their sway
Throughout the nether sphere! — And if with this
I mix more lowly matter; with the thing
Contemplated, describe the mind and Man
Contemplating; and who, and what he was —
The transitory Being that beheld
This Vision: — when and where, and how he lived;
Be not this labour useless. If such theme
May sort with highest objects, then — dread Power!
Whose gracious favour is the primal source
Of all illumination — may my Life
Express the image of a better time,
More wise desires, and simpler manners; —nurse
My heart in genuine freedom: — all pure thoughts
Be with me; — so shall thy unfailing love
Guide, and support, and cheer me to the end!

TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

GRASMERE, December 25, 1799.

. . . We arrived here on the evening of St. Thomas's day, last Friday, and have now been four days in our new abode without writing to you — a long time! but we have been in such confusion as not to have had a moment's

DOVE Cottage, Wordsworth's Bedroom.

"Soft slumbers, that did gently steep
Our spirits, carrying with them dreams of flowers,
And wild notes warbled among leafy bowers."

— **A Farewell**, p. 162.

leisure. My dear friend, we talk of you perpetually, and for me I see you everywhere.

But let me be a little more methodical. We left Sockburn last Tuesday morning. We crossed the Tees by moonlight in the Sockburn fields, and after ten good miles' riding came in sight of the Swale. It is there a beautiful river, with its green bank and flat holms scattered over with trees. Four miles further brought us to Richmond, with its huge ivied castle, its friarage steeple, its castle tower resembling a huge steeple, and two other steeple towers, for such they appeared to us. The situation of this place resembles that of Barnard Castle, but I should suppose is somewhat inferior to it. George accompanied us eight miles further, and there we parted with sorrowful hearts. We were now in Wensley Dale, and Dorothy and I set off side by side to foot it as far as Kendal. I will not clog my letter with a description of this celebrated dale; but I must not neglect to mention that a little before sunset we reached one of the waterfalls, of which I read you a short description in Mr Taylor's tour. It is a singular scene; I meant to have given you some account of it, but I feel myself too lazy to execute the task. 'T is such a performance as you might have expected from some giant gardener employed by one of Queen Elizabeth's courtiers, if this same giant gardener had consulted with Spenser, and they two had finished the work together. By this you will understand that it is at once formal and wild. We reached Askrigg, twelve miles, before six in the evening, having been obliged to walk the last two miles over hard frozen roads, to the great annoy-

ance of our ankles and feet. Next morning the earth was thinly covered with snow, enough to make the road soft and prevent its being slippery.

On leaving Askrigg we turned aside to see another waterfall. It was a beautiful morning, with driving snow showers, which disappeared by fits, and unveiled the east, which was all one delicious pale orange colour. After walking through two small fields, we came to a mill, which we passed; and in a moment a sweet little valley opened before us, with an area of grassy ground, and a stream dashing over various laminæ of black rocks, close under a bank covered with firs; the bank and stream on our left, another woody bank on our right, and the flat meadow in front, from which, as at Buttermere, the stream had retired as it were to hide itself under the shade. As we walked up this delightful valley we were tempted to look back perpetually on the stream, which reflected the orange lights of the morning among the gloomy rocks, with a brightness varying with the agitation of the current. The steeple of Askrigg was between us and the east, at the bottom of the valley; it was not a quarter of a mile distant, but oh! how far we were from it! The two banks seemed to join before us with a facing of rock common to them both. When we reached this bottom the valley opened out again; two rocky banks on each side, which, hung with ivy and moss, and fringed luxuriantly with brushwood, ran directly parallel to each other, and then approaching with a gentle curve at their point of union, presented a lofty waterfall, the termination of the valley. It was a keen frosty morning, showers of snow

threatening us, but the sun bright and active. We had a task of twenty-one miles to perform in a short winter's day. All this put our minds into such a state of excitation that we were no unworthy spectators of this delightful scene. On a nearer approach the waters seemed to fall down a tall arch or niche that had shaped itself by insensible moulderings in the wall of an old castle. We left this spot with reluctance, but highly exhilarated.

When we had walked about a mile and a half we overtook two men with a string of ponies and some empty carts. I recommended to Dorothy to avail herself of this opportunity of husbanding her strength: we rode with them more than two miles. 'T was bitter cold, the wind driving the snow behind us in the best style of a mountain storm. We soon reached an inn at a place called Hardrane, and descending from our vehicles, after warming ourselves by the cottage fire, we walked up the brook-side to take a view of a third waterfall. We had not walked above a few hundred yards between two winding rocky banks before we came full upon the waterfall, which seemed to throw itself in a narrow line from a lofty wall of rock, the water, which shot manifestly to some distance from the rock, seeming to be dispersed into a thin shower scarcely visible before it reached the basin. We were disappointed in the cascade itself, though the introductory and accompanying banks were an exquisite mixture of grandeur and beauty. We walked up to the fall; and what would I not give if I could convey to you the feelings and images which were then communicated to me? After cautiously sounding our way over stones of all col-

ours and sizes, encased in the clearest water formed by the spray of the fall, we found the rock, which before had appeared like a wall, extending itself over our heads, like the ceiling of a huge cave, from the summit of which the waters shot directly over our heads into a basin, and among fragments wrinkled over with masses of ice as white as snow, or rather, as Dorothy says, like congealed froth. The water fell at least ten yards from us, and we stood directly behind it, the excavation not so deep in the rock as to impress any feeling of darkness, but lofty and magnificent; but in connection with the adjoining banks excluding as much of the sky as could well be spared from a scene so exquisitely beautiful.

The spot where we stood was as dry as the chamber in which I am now sitting, and the incumbent rock, of which the groundwork was limestone, veined and dappled with colours which melted into each other with every possible variety of colour. On the summit of the cave were three festoons, or rather wrinkles, in the rock, run up parallel like the folds of a curtain when it is drawn up. Each of these was hung with icicles of various length, and nearly in the middle of the festoon in the deepest valley of the waves that ran parallel to each other, the stream shot from the rows of icicles in irregular fits of strength, and with a body of water that varied every moment. Sometimes the stream shot into the basin in one continued current; sometimes it was interrupted almost in the midst of its fall, and was blown towards part of the waterfall at no great distance from our feet like the heaviest thundershower. In such a situation you have at every moment

DOVE Cottage, the Well.

"Bright gowan, and marsh-marigold, farewell!
Whom from the borders of the Lake we brought
And placed together near our rocky Well."

— **A Farewell**, p. 160.

a feeling of the presence of the sky. Large fleecy clouds drove over our heads above the rush of the water, and the sky appeared of a blue more than usually brilliant. The rocks on each side, which, joining with the side of this cave, formed the vista of the brook, were chequered with three diminutive waterfalls or rather courses of water. Each of these was a miniature of all that summer and winter can produce of delicate beauty. The rock in the centre of the falls, where the water was most abundant, a deep black, the adjoining parts yellow, white, purple, and dove-colour, covered with water-plants of the most vivid green, and hung with streaming icicles, that in some places seemed to conceal the verdure of the plants, and the violet and yellow variegation of the rocks; and in some places render the colours more brilliant.

I cannot express to you the enchanting effect produced by this Arabian scene of colour as the wind blew aside the great waterfall behind which we stood and alternately hid and revealed each of these fairy cataracts in irregular succession, or displayed them with various gradations of distinctness as the intervening spray was thickened or dispersed. What a scene, too, in summer! In the luxury of our imagination we could not help feeding upon the pleasure which this cave, in the heat of a July noon, would spread through a frame exquisitely sensible. That huge rock on the right, the bank winding round on the left with all its living foliage, and the breeze stealing up the valley, and bedewing the cavern with the freshest imaginable spray. And then the murmur of the water, the quiet, the seclusion, and a long summer day.

FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH TO MRS. MARSHALL

GRASMERE, September 10, 1800.

. . . . . .

We are daily more delighted with Grasmere and its neighbourhood. Our walks are perpetually varied, and we are more fond of the mountains as our acquaintance with them increases. We have a boat upon the lake, and a small orchard, and a small garden; which, as it is the work of our own hands, we regard with pride and partiality. This garden we enclosed from the road, and pulled down a fence which formerly divided it from the orchard. The orchard is very small; but then it is a delightful one, from its retirement, and the excessive beauty of the prospect from it. Our cottage is quite large enough for us, though very small; and we have made it neat and comfortable within doors, and it looks very nice on the outside, for though the roses and honeysuckles, which we have planted against it, are only of this year's growth, yet it is covered all over with green leaves and scarlet flowers; for we have trained scarlet beans upon threads, which are not only exceedingly beautiful, but very useful, as their produce is immense. The only objection we have to our house is that it is rather too near the road; and from its smallness, and the manner in which it is built, noises pass from one part of the house to the other; so that if we had any visitors, a sick person could not be in quietness. . . . My brother John has been with us eight months, during which time we have had a good deal of company. . . .

EASEDALE Beck, Grasmere.

"Brook, whose society the Poet seeks,
Intent his wasted spirits to renew."
—Sonnet, p. 187.

"By the side of Easedale Beck, I have composed thousands of verses."
—"Emma's Dell," Wordsworth's Note, p. 145.

William is going to publish a second edition of the "Lyrical Ballads," with a second volume. He intends to give them the title of "Poems by W. Wordsworth," as Mrs Robinson has claimed the title, and is about publishing a volume of *Lyrical Tales*.[1] This is a great objection to the former title, particularly as they are both printed at the same press, and Longman is the publisher of both works. The first volume sold much better than we expected, and was liked by a much greater number of people; not that we had ever much doubt of its finally making its way; but we knew that poems, so different from what have in general become popular immediately after their publication, were not likely to be admired all at once. The first volume, I have no doubt, has prepared a number of purchasers for the second; and, independently of that, I think the second is much more likely to please the generality of readers. William's health is by no means strong. He has written a great deal since we first went to Alfoxden, namely, during the years preceding our going into Germany, while we were there, and since our arrival in England; and he writes with so much feeling and agitation that it brings on a sense of pain. . . .

We have spent a week at Mr Coleridge's since his arrival at Keswick. His house is most delightfully situated, and combines all possible advantages both for his wife and himself. *She* likes to be near a town, *he* in the country. It is only half or quarter of a mile from Keswick, and commands a view of the whole vale. . . .

[1] A volume, "Lyrical Tales," was published at London in 1800, written by Mrs. Mary Robinson.

William and John were in Yorkshire last summer,[1] at Goredale, Yordas, &c. Thence they went to see our friends the Hutchinsons.[2] During their absence I felt myself very lonely. . . . We are very comfortably situated with respect to neighbours of the lower classes. They are excellent people, friendly in performing all offices of friendship and humanity, and attentive to us without servility. If we were sick they would wait upon us night and day. We are also upon very intimate terms with one family in the middle rank of life, a clergyman[3] with a very small income, his wife, son, and daughter. The old man is upwards of eighty, yet he goes a-fishing to the tarns on the hill-tops with my brothers, and he is as active as any man of fifty. His wife is a delightful old woman, mild and gentle, yet cheerful in her manners, and much of the gentlewoman, so made by long exercise of the duties of a wife and a mother, and the charities of a neighbour; for she has lived forty years in the Vale and seldom left her home. . . .

We walk at all times of the day; we row upon the water; and, in the summer, sit a great part of our time under the apple trees of the orchard, or in a wood close by the lake side. William writes verses. John goes fishing. We read the books we have, and such as we can procure. I read German, partly as preparatory to translating; but I am unfit for the task alone, and William is better employed,

[1] They left Grasmere on May 14, and returned on June 7, 1800.

[2] Mary Hutchinson, of this family, became the wife of Wordsworth two years later.

[3] Sympson, the Pastor of "The Excursion."

so I do not know when it will turn to much account. If William's name rises amongst the booksellers we shall have no occasion for it. We often have our friends calling in upon us. Mr Clarkson is the man who took so much pains about the slave trade. He has a farm at Ullswater, and has built a house. Mrs C. is a pleasant woman.

EMMA'S DELL[1]

It was an April morning: fresh and clear
The Rivulet, delighting in its strength,
Ran with a young man's speed; and yet the voice
Of waters which the winter had supplied
Was softened down into a vernal tone.
The spirit of enjoyment and desire,
And hopes and wishes, from all living things
Went circling, like a multitude of sounds.
The budding groves seemed eager to urge on
The steps of June; as if their various hues
Were only hindrances that stood between
Them and their object: but, meanwhile, prevailed
Such an entire contentment in the air
That every naked ash, and tardy tree
Yet leafless, showed as if the countenance
With which it looked on this delightful day
Were native to the summer. — Up the brook

[1] This poem was suggested on the banks of the brook that runs through Easedale, which is, in some parts of its course, as wild and beautiful as brook can be. I have composed thousands of verses by the side of it. (Wordsworth's Note.)

I roamed in the confusion of my heart,
Alive to all things and forgetting all.
At length I to a sudden turning came
In this continuous glen, where down a rock
The Stream, so ardent in its course before,
Sent forth such sallies of glad sound, that all
Which I till then had heard, appeared the voice
Of common pleasure: beast and bird, the lamb,
The shepherd's dog, the linnet and the thrush
Vied with this waterfall, and made a song,
Which, while I listened, seemed like the wild growth
Or like some natural produce of the air,
That could not cease to be. Green leaves were here;
But 't was the foliage of the rocks — the birch,
The yew, the holly, and the bright green thorn,
With hanging islands of resplendent furze:
And, on a summit, distant a short space,
By any who should look beyond the dell,
A single mountain-cottage might be seen.
I gazed and gazed, and to myself I said,
"Our thoughts at least are ours; and this wild nook,
My Emma, I will dedicate to thee."
—Soon did the spot become my other home,
My dwelling, and my out-of-doors abode.
And, of the Shepherds who have seen me there,
To whom I sometimes in our idle talk
Have told this fancy, two or three, perhaps,
Years after we are gone and in our graves,
When they have cause to speak of this wild place,
May call it by the name of Emma's Dell.

EMMA'S Dell, Grasmere.

"Our thoughts at least are ours; and this wild nook
My EMMA, *I will dedicate to thee."*

— Emma's Dell, p. 146.

THE DAFFODILS; OR, "I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD"[1]

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.[2]

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed — and gazed — but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

[1] The Daffodils grew and still grow on the margin of Ullswater, and probably may be seen to this day as beautiful in the month of March, nodding their golden heads beside the dancing and foaming waves. (Wordsworth's Note.)

[2] When we were in the woods beyond Gowbarrow Park we saw a few daffodils . . . as we went along there were more and yet more. . . . I never saw daffodils so beautiful . . . they tossed and reeled and danced, and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind, that blew upon them over the lake; they looked so gay, ever glancing, ever changing. (Dorothy's Journal, April 15, 1802.)

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;[1]
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

POEMS RELATING TO NAB-SCAR

I. THE WATERFALL AND THE EGLANTINE[2]

I

"Begone, thou fond presumptuous Elf,"
Exclaimed an angry Voice,
"Nor dare to thrust thy foolish self
Between me and my choice!"
A small Cascade fresh swoln with snows
Thus threatened a poor Briar-rose,
That, all bespattered with his foam,
And dancing high and dancing low,
Was living, as a child might know,
In an unhappy home.

II

"Dost thou presume my course to block?
Off, off! or, puny Thing!
I'll hurl thee headlong with the rock
To which thy fibres cling."

[1] These two lines were written by Mrs. Wordsworth.

[2] We determined to go under Nab-Scar. . . . Coleridge and I pushed on before and sat down upon a rocky seat. Wm. came to us and repeated his poems (referring to this and following poem). (Dorothy's Journal, April 23, 1802.)

The Flood was tyrannous and strong;
The patient Briar suffered long,
Nor did he utter groan or sigh,
Hoping the danger would be past;
But, seeing no relief, at last,
He ventured to reply.

III

"Ah!" said the Briar, "blame me not;
Why should we dwell in strife?
We who in this sequestered spot
Once lived a happy life!
You stirred me on my rocky bed —
What pleasure through my veins you spread
The summer long, from day to day,
My leaves you freshened and bedewed;
Nor was it common gratitude
That did your cares repay.

IV

"When spring came on with bud and bell,
Among these rocks did I
Before you hang my wreaths to tell
That gentle days were nigh!
And in the sultry summer hours,
I sheltered you with leaves and flowers;
And in my leaves — now shed and gone,
The linnet lodged, and for us two
Chanted his pretty songs, when you
Had little voice or none.

V

"But now proud thoughts are in your breast —
What grief is mine you see,
Ah! would you think, even yet how blest
Together we might be!
Though of both leaf and flower bereft,
Some ornaments to me are left —
Rich store of scarlet hips is mine,
With which I, in my humble way,
Would deck you many a winter day,
A happy Eglantine!"

VI

What more he said I cannot tell,
The torrent down the rocky dell
Came thundering loud and fast;
I listened, nor aught else could hear;
The Briar quaked — and much I fear
Those accents were his last.

II. THE OAK AND THE BROOM[1]

A PASTORAL

I

His simple truths did Andrew glean
Beside the babbling rills;
A careful student he had been
Among the woods and hills.

[1] Suggested upon the mountain pathway that leads from Upper Rydal to Grasmere. The ponderous block of stone which is mentioned in the poem, remains, I believe, to this day, a good way up Nab-Scar. Broom

NAB SCAR from the River Rothay.

—See Notes to "The Waterfall and the Eglantine" and "The Oak and the Broom," pp. 148 and 150.

One winter's night, when through the trees
The wind was roaring, on his knees
His youngest born did Andrew hold:
And while the rest, a ruddy quire,
Were seated round their blazing fire,
This Tale the Shepherd told.

II

"I saw a crag, a lofty stone
As ever tempest beat!
Out of its head an Oak had grown,
A Broom out of its feet.
The time was March, a cheerful noon —
The thaw-wind, with the breath of June,
Breathed gently from the warm south-west:
When, in a voice sedate with age,
This Oak, a giant and a sage,
His neighbour thus addressed: —

III

"'Eight weary weeks, through rock and clay
Along this mountain's edge,
The Frost hath wrought both night and day,
Wedge driving after wedge.
Look up! and think, above your head
What trouble, surely, will be bred;
Last night I heard a crash — 't is true,
The splinters took another road —
I see them yonder — what a load
For such a Thing as you!

grows under it, and in many places on the side of the precipice. (Wordsworth's Note.)

IV

" ' You are preparing as before,
To deck your slender shape ;
And yet, just three years back — no more —
You had a strange escape :
Down from yon cliff a fragment broke ;
It thundered down, with fire and smoke,
And hitherward pursued its way ;
This ponderous block was caught by me,
And o'er your head, as you may see,
'T is hanging to this day !

V

" ' If breeze or bird to this rough steep
Your kind's first seed did bear ;
The breeze had better been asleep,
The bird caught in a snare :
For you and your green twigs decoy
The little witless shepherd-boy
To come and slumber in your bower ;
And, trust me, on some sultry noon,
Both you and he, Heaven knows how soon !
Will perish in one hour.

VI

" ' From me this friendly warning take ' —
The Broom began to doze,
And thus, to keep herself awake,
Did gently interpose :
' My thanks for your discourse are due ;

That more than what you say is true,
I know, and I have known it long;
Frail is the bond by which we hold
Our being, whether young or old,
Wise, foolish, weak, or strong.

VII

"'Disasters, do the best we can,
Will reach both great and small;
And he is oft the wisest man,
Who is not wise at all.
For me, why should I wish to roam?
This spot is my paternal home,
It is my pleasant heritage;
My father many a happy year,
Spread here his careless blossoms, here
Attained a good old age.

VIII

"'Even such as his may be my lot.
What cause have I to haunt
My heart with terrors? Am I not
In truth a favoured plant!
On me such bounty Summer pours,
That I am covered o'er with flowers;
And when the Frost is in the sky,
My branches are so fresh and gay
That you might look at me and say,
This Plant can never die.

IX

" 'The butterfly, all green and gold,
To me hath often flown,
Here in my blossoms to behold
Wings lovely as his own.
When grass is chill with rain or dew,
Beneath my shade, the mother-ewe
Lies with her infant lamb; I see
The love they to each other make,
And the sweet joy which they partake,
It is a joy to me.'

X

" Her voice was blithe, her heart was light:
The Broom might have pursued
Her speech, until the stars of night
Their journey had renewed;
But in the branches of the oak
Two ravens now began to croak
Their nuptial song, a gladsome air;
And to her own green bower the breeze
That instant brought two stripling bees
To rest, or murmur there.

XI

" One night, my Children! from the north
There came a furious blast;
At break of day I ventured forth,
And near the cliff I passed.

RYDAL Lake and Nab Scar.

"When spring came on with bud and bell,
Among these rocks did I
Before you hang my wreaths to tell
That gentle days were nigh!"

— The Waterfall and the Eglantine, p. 149.

The storm had fallen upon the Oak,
And struck him with a mighty stroke,
And whirled, and whirled him far away;
And in one hospitable cleft,
The little careless Broom was left
To live for many a day."

III. "YES, IT WAS THE MOUNTAIN ECHO"[1]

Yes, it was the mountain Echo,
Solitary, clear, profound,
Answering to the shouting Cuckoo,
Giving to her sound for sound!

Unsolicited reply
To a babbling wanderer sent;
Like her ordinary cry,
Like — but oh, how different!

Hears not also mortal Life?
Hear not we, unthinking Creatures!
Slaves of folly, love, or strife —
Voices of two different natures?

Have not *we* too? — yes, we have
Answers, and we know not whence;
Echoes from beyond the grave,
Recognised intelligence!

[1] The echo came from Nab-scar, when I was walking on the opposite side of Rydal Mere. (Wordsworth's Note.)

Such rebounds our inward ear
Catches sometimes from afar —
Listen, ponder, hold them dear;
For of God, — of God they are.

THE IDLE SHEPHERD-BOYS; OR, DUNGEON-GHYLL FORCE

A PASTORAL

The valley rings with mirth and joy;
Among the hills the echoes play
A never, never-ending song
To welcome in the May.
The magpie chatters with delight;
The mountain raven's youngling brood
Have left the mother and the nest;
And they go rambling east and west
In search of their own food;
Or through the glittering vapours dart
In very wantonness of heart.

Beneath a rock, upon the grass,
Two boys are sitting in the sun;
Their work, if any work they have,
Is out of mind — or done.
On pipes of sycamore they play
The fragments of a Christmas hymn;
Or with that plant which in our dale

We call stag-horn, or fox's tail,
Their rusty hats they trim:
And thus, as happy as the day,
Those Shepherds wear the time away.

Along the river's stony marge
The sand-lark chants a joyous song;
The thrush is busy in the wood,
And carols loud and strong.
A thousand lambs are on the rocks,
All newly born! both earth and sky
Keep jubilee, and more than all,
Those boys with their green coronal;
They never hear the cry,
That plaintive cry! which up the hill
Comes from the depth of Dungeon-Ghyll.

Said Walter, leaping from the ground,
"Down to the stump of yon old yew
We 'll for our whistles run a race."
—— Away the shepherds flew;
They leapt — they ran — and when they came
Right opposite to Dungeon-Ghyll,
Seeing that he should lose the prize,
"Stop!" to his comrade Walter cries —
James stopped with no good will:
Said Walter then, exulting; "Here
You 'll find a task for half a year.

"Cross, if you dare, where I shall cross —
Come on, and tread where I shall tread."
The other took him at his word,
And followed as he led.
It was a spot which you may see
If ever you to Langdale go;
Into a chasm a mighty block
Hath fallen, and made a bridge of rock:
The gulf is deep below;
And, in a basin black and small,
Receives a lofty waterfall.

With staff in hand across the cleft
The challenger pursued his march;
And now, all eyes and feet, hath gained
The middle of the arch.
When list! he hears a piteous moan —
Again! — his heart within him dies —
His pulse is stopped, his breath is lost,
He totters, pallid as a ghost,
And, looking down, espies
A lamb, that in the pool is pent
Within that black and frightful rent.

The lamb had slipped into the stream,
And safe without a bruise or wound
The cataract had borne him down
Into the gulf profound.
His dam had seen him when he fell,
She saw him down the torrent borne;

DUNGEON-GHYLL Force, Langdale.

"*It was a spot which you may see*
If ever you to Langdale go;
Into a chasm a mighty block
Hath fallen, and made a bridge of rock;
The gulf is deep below;
And, in a basin black and small,
Receives a lofty waterfall."

— The Idle Shepherd-Boys, p. 158.

And, while with all a mother's love
She from the lofty rocks above
Sent forth a cry forlorn,
The lamb, still swimming round and round,
Made answer to that plaintive sound.

When he had learnt what thing it was,
That sent this rueful cry; I ween
The Boy recovered heart, and told
The sight which he had seen.
Both gladly now deferred their task;
Nor was there wanting other aid —
A Poet, one who loves the brooks
Far better than the sages' books,
By chance had thither strayed;
And there the helpless lamb he found
By those huge rocks encompassed round.

He drew it from the troubled pool,
And brought it forth into the light:
The Shepherds met him with his charge,
An unexpected sight!
Into their arms the lamb they took,
Whose life and limbs the flood had spared;
Then up the steep ascent they hied,
And placed him at his mother's side;
And gently did the Bard
Those idle Shepherd-boys upbraid,
And bade them better mind their trade.

A FAREWELL[1]

Farewell, thou little Nook of mountain-ground,
Thou rocky corner in the lowest stair
Of that magnificent temple which doth bound
One side of our whole vale with grandeur rare;
Sweet garden-orchard, eminently fair,
The loveliest spot that man hath ever found,
Farewell! — we leave thee to Heaven's peaceful care,
Thee, and the Cottage which thou dost surround.

Our boat is safely anchored by the shore,
And there will safely ride when we are gone;
The flowering shrubs that deck our humble door
Will prosper, though untended and alone:
Fields, goods, and far-off chattels we have none:
These narrow bounds contain our private store
Of things earth makes, and sun doth shine upon;
Here are they in our sight — we have no more.

Sunshine and shower be with you, bud and bell!
For two months now in vain we shall be sought:
We leave you here in solitude to dwell
With these our latest gifts of tender thought;
Thou, like the morning, in thy saffron coat,
Bright gowan, and marsh-marigold, farewell!
Whom from the borders of the Lake we brought,
And placed together near our rocky Well.

[1] Written in 1802, on leaving Grasmere to bring home his bride from Gallow-hill, near Scarborough.

We go for One to whom ye will be dear;
And she will prize this Bower, this Indian shed,
Our own contrivance, Building without peer!
— A gentle Maid, whose heart is lowly bred,
Whose pleasures are in wild fields gatherèd,
With joyousness, and with a thoughtful cheer,
Will come to you; to you herself will wed;
And love the blessed life that we lead here.

Dear Spot! which we have watched with tender heed,
Bringing thee chosen plants and blossoms blown
Among the distant mountains, flower and weed,
Which thou hast taken to thee as thy own,
Making all kindness registered and known;
Thou for our sakes, though Nature's child indeed,
Fair in thyself and beautiful alone,
Hast taken gifts which thou dost little need.

And O most constant, yet most fickle Place,
Thou hast thy wayward moods, as thou dost show
To them who look not daily on thy face;
Who, being loved, in love no bounds dost know,
And say'st when we forsake thee, "Let them go!"
Thou easy-hearted Thing, with thy wild race
Of weeds and flowers, till we return be slow,
And travel with the year at a soft pace.

Help us to tell Her tales of years gone by,
And this sweet spring, the best beloved and best;
Joy will be flown in its mortality;
Something must stay to tell us of the rest.

Here, thronged with primroses, the steep rock's breast
Glittered at evening like a starry sky;
And in this bush our sparrow built her nest,
Of which I sang one song that will not die.

O happy Garden! whose seclusion deep
Hath been so friendly to industrious hours;
And to soft slumbers, that did gently steep
Our spirits, carrying with them dreams of flowers,
And wild notes warbled among leafy bowers;
Two burning months let summer overleap,
And, coming back with Her who will be ours,
Into thy bosom we again shall creep.

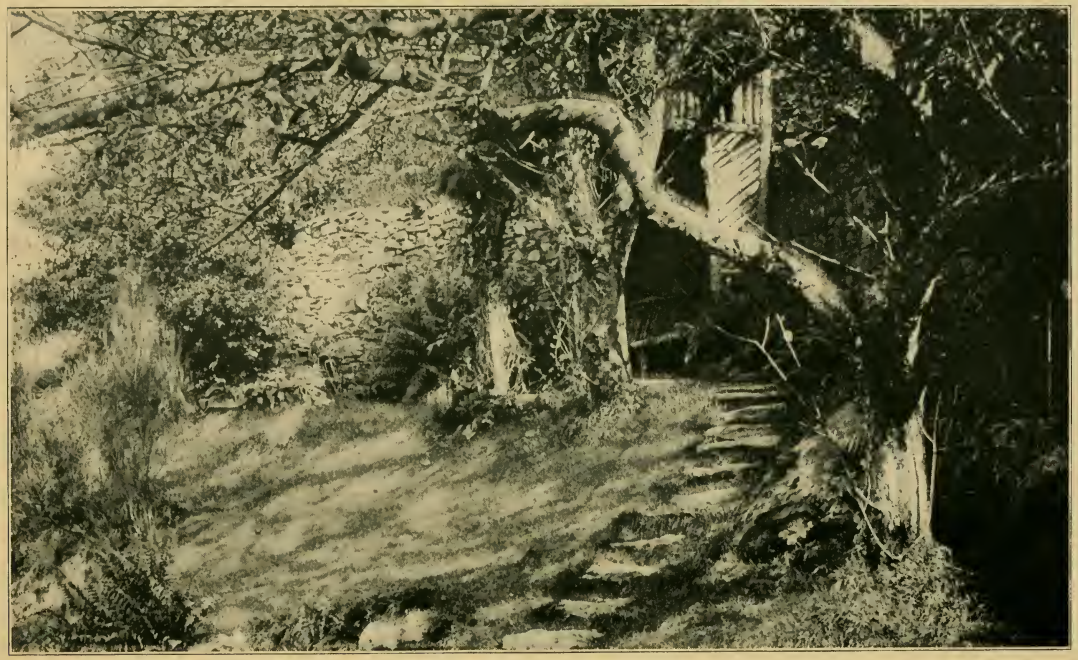
"SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT"[1]

She was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty;

[1] To Mrs. Wordsworth; written two years after their marriage.

IN the Garden of Dove Cottage. The Poet's Seat.



" Farewell, thou little Nook of mountain-ground,
Thou rocky corner in the lowest stair
Of that magnificent temple which doth bound
One side of our whole vale with grandeur rare."

— A Farewell, p. 160.

A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT[1]

GRASMERE, 14th October, 1803.

. . . Owing to a set of painful and uneasy sensations which I have, more or less, at all times about my chest, from a disease which chiefly affects my nerves and digestive organs, and which makes my aversion from writing little less than madness, I deferred writing to you, being

[1] Sir George Beaumont had presented Wordsworth (whom he had not yet met) with a small property at Applethwaite, three miles west of Greta Hall, where Coleridge was then living, in order that the two poets might resume the familiar intercourse of Somersetshire days. This act was the beginning of a life-long friendship, although the scheme of residence there was never carried out.

at first made still more uncomfortable by travelling, and loathing to do violence to myself, in what ought to be an act of pure pleasure and enjoyment, viz., the expression of my deep sense of your goodness. This feeling was, indeed, so strong in me, as to make me look upon the act of writing to you, not as the work of a moment, but as a business with something little less than awful in it, a thing not to be done but in my best, my purest, and my happiest moments. . . . At last, I said, I will write at home from my own fireside, when I shall be at ease and in comfort. I have now been more than a fortnight at home, but the uneasiness in my chest has made me beat off the time when the pen was to be taken up. I do not know from what cause it is, but during the last three years I have never had a pen in my hand for five minutes, before my whole frame becomes one bundle of uneasiness; a perspiration starts out all over me, and my chest is oppressed in a manner I cannot describe. . . . But I have troubled you far too much with this. Such I am, however, and deeply I regret that I am such. I shall conclude with solemnly assuring you, late as it is, that nothing can wear out of my heart, as long as my faculties remain, the deep feeling which I have of your delicate and noble conduct towards me.

It is now high time to speak of the estate, and what is to be done with it. It is a most delightful situation, and few things would give me greater pleasure than to realise the plan which you had in view for me. But I am afraid, I am sorry to say, that the chances are very much against this, partly on account of the state of my own affairs, and still more from the improbability of Mr Coleridge's con-

tinuing in the country. The writings are at present in my possession, and what I should wish is, that I might be considered at present as steward of the land, with liberty to lay out the rent in planting, or any other improvement which might be thought advisable, with a view to building upon it. And if it should be out of my own power to pitch my tent there, I would then request that you would give me leave to restore the property to your own hands, in order that you might have the opportunity of again presenting it to some worthy person who might be so fortunate as to be able to make that pleasant use of it which it was your wish I should have done.[1] . . . How often did we wish for five minutes' command of your pencil while we were in Scotland! or rather that you had been with us. Sometimes I am sure you would have been delighted. In one thing Scotland is superior to every country I have travelled in; I mean the graceful beauty of the dresses and figures. There is a tone of imagination about them beyond anything I have seen elsewhere.

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

GRASMERE, July 20, 1804.

. . . How sorry we all are under this roof that we cannot have the pleasure of seeing you and Lady Beaumont down this summer! The weather has been most glorious, and the country, of course, most delightful.

[1] This Applethwaite property was formally conveyed to Wordsworth soon after, and is still in possession of the family. A pencil note by Dora Wordsworth says her father made it over to *her* when she was a "frail, feeble monthling."

Our own valley in particular was last night, by the light of the full moon, and in the perfect stillness of the lake, a scene of loveliness and repose as affecting as was ever beheld by the eye of man. . . .

That Loughrigg Tarn, beautiful pool of water as it is, is a perpetual mortification to me when I think that you and Lady Beaumont were so near having a summer-nest there.[1] This is often talked over among us; and we always end the subject with a heigh ho! of regret. But I must think of concluding. My sister thanks Lady Beaumont for her last letter, and will write to her in a few days; but I must say to her myself how happy I was to hear that her sister had derived any consolation from Coleridge's poems and mine. I must also add how much pleasure it gives me that Lady Beaumont is so kindly, so affectionately disposed to my dear and good sister, and also to the other unknown parts of my family. Could we but have Coleridge back among us again! There is no happiness in this life but in intellect and virtue.

TO SIR WALTER SCOTT

January 16, 1805.

. . . . . .

If you come next summer Southey will almost certainly be at Keswick, and I hope Coleridge also; although it will be the duty of all his friends to do their utmost

[1] Sir George Beaumont had purchased Loughrigg Tarn intending to build a summer cottage on it. But the plan was abandoned, the tarn resold, and the money from it given to Wordsworth. He applied it to the purchase of yew-trees for Grasmere churchyard, where they still grow, one of them overshadowing the poet's grave.

in forcing him from the country, to which he is so much attached, but the rainy climate disagrees with him miserably. When Coleridge has found out a residence better suited to his state of health, we shall remove and settle near him. I mention these things that you may be prevailed upon to come and see us here, while we are yet such near neighbours of yours, and inhabitants of a country, the more retired beauties of which we can lead you to better than anybody else. . . .

I am very glad to hear of your farm on Tweedside. You will be quite in the district of your own most interesting local feelings, a charming country besides; and I was not a little glad it brought you so much nearer to us, instead of removing you so much further away from us. I sincerely wish you fortune in your farming labours, good crops, thriving cattle, and little vexation.

On the other side you will find a few stanzas, which I hope (for the subject at least) will give you some pleasure.[1] I wrote them, not without a view of pleasing you, soon after our return from Scotland, though I have been too lazy to send them to you till now. They are in the same sort of metre as the Leader Haughs, and I have borrowed the name Burn-mill meadow from that poem, for which I wish you would substitute something that may really be found in the Vale of Yarrow. . . . Believe me, your sincere friend,

W. Wordsworth.

[1] The "few stanzas" here referred to are the poem "Yarrow Unvisited" here following, — a memorial of Wordsworth's visit in 1803. Wordsworth made four trips in Scotland. "Yarrow Visited" and "Yarrow Revisited" are memorials of these later journeys.

YARROW UNVISITED

From Stirling castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unravelled;
Had trod the banks of Clyde and Tay,
And with the Tweed had travelled;
And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my "*winsome Marrow*," [1]
"Whate'er betide, we'll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow."

"Let Yarrow folk, *frae* Selkirk town,
Who have been buying, selling,
Go back to Yarrow, 't is their own;
Each maiden to her dwelling!
On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow!
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

"There 's Galla Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us;
And Dryborough, where with chiming Tweed
The lintwhites sing in chorus;
There 's pleasant Tiviot-dale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow:
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow?

[1] A Scotch word for companion or sweetheart; Dorothy was his fellow-traveller.

STYBARROW Crag, Ullswater (adjoining Gowbarrow Park of "The Daffodils").

"The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company."

—I Wandered Lonely, p. 147.

See Notes to this poem.

" What 's Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under ?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder."
— Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn ;
My True-love sighed for sorrow ;
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow !

" Oh ! green," said I, " are Yarrow's holms,
And sweet is Yarrow's flowing !
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,
But we will leave it growing.
O'er hilly path, and open Strath,
We 'll wander Scotland thorough ;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow.

" Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow ;
The swan on still St. Mary's Lake [1]
Float double, swan and shadow !
We will not see them ; will not go,
To-day, nor yet to-morrow,
Enough if in our hearts we know
There 's such a place as Yarrow.

" Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown !
It must, or we shall rue it :
We have a vision of our own ;
Ah ! why should we undo it ?

[1] The Yarrow rises in St. Mary's Lake.

The treasured dreams of times long past,
We 'll keep them, winsome Marrow!
For when we 're there, although 't is fair,
'T will be another Yarrow!

"If Care with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly, —
Should we be loth to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy;
Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'T will soothe us in our sorrow,
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow!"

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

GRASMERE, Feb. 20, 1805.

. . . Let me again mention my beloved brother.[1] It is now just five years since — after a separation of fourteen years (I may call it a separation, for we only saw him four or five times, and by glimpses) — he came to visit his sister and me in this cottage, and passed eight blessed months with us. He was then waiting for the command of the ship to which he was appointed when he quitted us. As you will have seen, we had little to live upon, and he as little (Lord Lonsdale being then alive).[2] But he en-

[1] John Wordsworth (1772–1805). See "The Daisy," "Elegiac Verses," and "Peele Castle in a Storm," for Wordsworth's poetical tributes to this brother.

[2] Lord Lonsdale was much in debt to the Wordsworth estate. But these obligations were never settled until after his death, when his son, Lord Lowther, paid the full amount, principal and interest.

couraged me to persist, and to keep my eye steady on its object. He would work for me (that was his language), for me and his sister; and I was to endeavour to do something for the world. He went to sea, as commander, with this hope; his voyage was very unsuccessful, he having lost by it considerably. When he came home, we chanced to be in London, and saw him. "Oh!" said he, "I have thought of you, and nothing but you; if ever of myself, and my bad success, it was only on your account." He went again to sea a second time, and also was uusuccessful; still with the same hopes on our account, though then not so necessary, Lord Lowther having paid the money. Lastly came the lamentable voyage, which he entered upon, full of expectation, and love to his sister and myself, and my wife, whom, indeed, he loved with all a brother's tenderness. This is the end of his part of the agreement — of his efforts for my welfare! God grant me life and strength to fulfil mine! I shall never forget him, — never lose sight of him. There is a bond between us yet, the same as if he were living, nay, far more sacred, calling upon me to do my utmost, as he to the last did his utmost to live in honour and worthiness. . . . He was heard by one of the surviving officers giving orders, with all possible calmness, a very little before the ship went down; and when he could remain at his post no longer, then, and not till then, he attempted to save himself. I knew this would be so, but it was satisfactory for me to have it confirmed by external evidence. Do not think our grief unreasonable. Of all human beings whom I ever knew, he was the man of the most rational desires, the most sedate

habits, and the most perfect self-command. He was modest and gentle, and shy even to disease; but this was wearing off. In every thing his judgments were sound and original; his taste in all the arts — music and poetry in particular (for these he, of course, had had the best opportunities of being familiar with) — was exquisite; and his eye for the beauties of nature was as fine and delicate as ever poet or painter was gifted with, in some discriminations — owing to his education and way of life — far superior to any person's I ever knew. But, alas! what avails it? It was the will of God that he should be taken away.

. . . . . .

I trust in God that I shall not want fortitude; but my loss is great and irreparable.

. . . . . .

Your most affectionate friend,

W. Wordsworth.

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

Grasmere, May 1, 1805.

My dear Sir George, — I have wished to write to you every day this long time, but I have also had another wish, which has interfered to prevent me; I mean the wish to resume my poetical labours: time was stealing away fast from me, and nothing done, and my mind still seeming unfit to do anything.

At first I had a strong impulse to write a poem that should record my brother's virtues, and be worthy of his

DAFFODILS blooming on the Banks of Ullswater.

" The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee."

— The Daffodils, p. 147.

memory. I began to give vent to my feelings, with this view, but I was overpowered by my subject, and could not proceed. I composed much, but it is all lost except a few lines, as it came from me in such a torrent that I was unable to remember it. I could not hold the pen myself, and the subject was such that I could not employ Mrs. Wordsworth or my sister as my amanuensis. This work must therefore rest a while till I am something calmer; I shall, however, never be at peace till, as far as in me lies, I have done justice to my departed brother's memory. His heroic death (the particulars of which I have now accurately collected from several of the survivors) exacts this from me, and still more his singularly interesting character, and virtuous and innocent life.

Unable to proceed with this work, I turned my thoughts again to the Poem on my own Life,[1] and you will be glad to hear that I have added 300 lines to it in the course of last week. Two books more will conclude it. It will be not much less than 9000 lines, — not hundred but thousand lines long, — an alarming length! and a thing unprecedented in literary history that a man should talk so much about himself. It is not self-conceit, as you will know well, that has induced me to do this, but real humility. I began the work because I was *unprepared to treat any more arduous subject, and diffident of my own powers.* Here, at least, I hoped that to a certain degree I should be sure of succeeding, as I had nothing to do but describe what I had felt and thought, and therefore could not easily be bewildered. This might have been done in narrower

[1] "The Prelude."

compass by a man of more address; but I have done my best. If, when the work shall be finished, it appears to the judicious to have redundancies, they shall be lopped off, if possible; but this is very difficult to do, when a man has written with thought; and this defect, whenever I have suspected it or found it to exist in any writings of mine, I have always found incurable. The fault lies too deep, and is in the first conception. If you see Coleridge before I do, do not speak of this to him, as I should like to have his judgment unpreoccupied by such an apprehension. . . .

Is your building going on? I was mortified that the sweet little valley, of which you spoke some time ago, was no longer in the possession of your family. It is the place, I believe, where that illustrious and most extraordinary man, Beaumont the poet, and his brother, were born. One is astonished when one thinks of that man having been only eight-and-twenty years of age, for I believe he was no more, when he died. Shakespeare, we are told, had scarcely written a single play at that age. I hope, for the sake of poets, you are proud of these men. . . .

I am anxious to know how your health goes on: we are better than we had reason to expect. When we look back upon this spring, it seems like a dreary dream to us. But I trust in God that we shall yet "bear up and steer right onward."

Farewell. — I am, your affectionate friend,

W. Wordsworth.

POEMS RELATING TO JOHN WORDSWORTH

"WHEN, TO THE ATTRACTIONS OF THE BUSY WORLD"

When, to the attractions of the busy world,
Preferring studious leisure, I had chosen
A habitation in this peaceful Vale,
Sharp season followed of continual storm
In deepest winter; and, from week to week,
Pathway, and lane, and public road, were clogged
With frequent showers of snow. Upon a hill
At a short distance from my cottage, stands
A stately Fir-grove, whither I was wont
To hasten, for I found, beneath the roof
Of that perennial shade, a cloistral place
Of refuge, with an unincumbered floor.
Here in safe covert, on the shallow snow,
And, sometimes, on a speck of visible earth,
The redbreast near me hopped; nor was I loth
To sympathise with vulgar coppice birds
That, for protection from the nipping blast,
Hither repaired. — A single beech-tree grew
Within this grove of firs! and, on the fork
Of that one beech, appeared a thrush's nest;
A last year's nest, conspicuously built
At such small elevation from the ground
As gave sure sign that they, who in that house
Of nature and of love had made their home
Amid the fir-trees, all the summer long
Dwelt in a tranquil spot. And oftentimes,

A few sheep, stragglers from some mountain-flock,
Would watch my motions with suspicious stare,
From the remotest outskirts of the grove, —
Some nook where they had made their final stand,
Huddling together from two fears — the fear
Of me and of the storm. Full many an hour
Here did I lose. But in this grove the trees
Had been so thickly planted, and had thriven
In such perplexed and intricate array;
That vainly did I seek, beneath their stems
A length of open space, where to and fro
My feet might move without concern or care;
And, baffled thus, though earth from day to day
Was fettered, and the air by storm disturbed,
I ceased the shelter to frequent, — and prized,
Less than I wished to prize, that calm recess.
The snows dissolved, and genial Spring returned
To clothe the fields with verdure. Other haunts
Meanwhile were mine; till, one bright April day,
By chance retiring from the glare of noon
To this forsaken covert, there I found
A hoary pathway traced between the trees,
And winding on with such an easy line
Along a natural opening, that I stood
Much wondering how I could have sought in vain
For what was now so obvious. To abide,
For an allotted interval of ease,
Under my cottage-roof, had gladly come
From the wild sea a cherished Visitant;
And with the sight of this same path — begun,

WORDSWORTH'S Fir Grove, near Grasmere.

"A stately Fir-grove, whither I was wont
To hasten, for I found, beneath the roof
Of that perennial shade, a cloistral place
Of refuge, with an unincumbered floor."

— When, to the Attractions of the Busy World, p. 175.

Begun and ended, in the shady grove,
Pleasant conviction flashed upon my mind
That, to this opportune recess allured,
He had surveyed it with a finer eye,
A heart more wakeful; and had worn the track
By pacing here, unwearied and alone,
In that habitual restlessness of foot
That haunts the Sailor measuring o'er and o'er
His short domain upon the vessel's deck,
While she pursues her course through the dreary sea.
When thou hadst quitted Esthwaite's pleasant shore,
And taken thy first leave of those green hills
And rocks that were the play-ground of thy youth,
Year followed year, my Brother! and we two,
Conversing not, knew little in what mould
Each other's mind was fashioned; and at length
When once again we met in Grasmere Vale,
Between us there was little other bond
Than common feelings of fraternal love.
But thou, a Schoolboy, to the sea hadst carried
Undying recollections! Nature there
Was with thee; she, who loved us both, she still
Was with thee; and even so didst thou become
A *silent* Poet; from the solitude
Of the vast sea didst bring a watchful heart
Still couchant, an inevitable ear,
And an eye practised like a blind man's touch.
— Back to the joyless Ocean thou art gone;
Nor from this vestige of thy musing hours
Could I withhold thy honoured name, — and now

I love the fir-grove with a perfect love.
Thither do I withdraw when cloudless suns
Shine hot, or wind blows troublesome and strong;
And there I sit at evening, when the steep
Of Silver-how, and Grasmere's peaceful lake,
And one green island, gleam between the stems
Of the dark firs, a visionary scene!
And, while I gaze upon the spectacle
Of clouded splendour, on this dream-like sight
Of solemn loveliness, I think on thee,
My Brother, and on all which thou hast lost.
Nor seldom, if I rightly guess, while Thou,
Muttering the verses which I muttered first
Among the mountains, through the midnight watch
Art pacing thoughtfully the vessel's deck
In some far region, here, while o'er my head,
At every impulse of the moving breeze,
The fir-grove murmurs with a sea-like sound,
Alone I tread this path; — for aught I know,
Timing my steps to thine; and, with a store
Of undistinguishable sympathies,
Mingling most earnest wishes for the day
When we, and others whom we love, shall meet
A second time, in Grasmere's happy Vale.

TO THE DAISY

Sweet Flower! belike one day to have
A place upon thy Poet's grave,
I welcome thee once more;

But He, who was on land, at sea,
My Brother, too, in loving thee,
Although he loved more silently,
Sleeps by his native shore.

Ah! hopeful, hopeful was the day
When to that Ship he bent his way,
To govern and to guide:
His wish was gained: a little time
Would bring him back in manhood's prime
And free for life, these hills to climb;
With all his wants supplied.

And full of hope day followed day
While that stout Ship at anchor lay
Beside the shores of Wight;
The May had then made all things green;
And, floating there, in pomp serene,
That Ship was goodly to be seen,
His pride and his delight!

Yet then, when called ashore, he sought
The tender peace of rural thought:
In more than happy mood
To your abodes, bright daisy Flowers!
He then would steal at leisure hours,
And loved you glittering in your bowers
A starry multitude.

But hark the word! — the ship is gone; —
Returns from her long course: — anon
Sets sail: — in season due,
Once more on English earth they stand:
But, when a third time from the land
They parted, sorrow was at hand
For Him and for his crew.

Ill-fated Vessel! — ghastly shock!
— At length delivered from the rock,
The deep she hath regained;
And through the stormy night they steer;
Labouring for life, in hope and fear,
To reach a safer shore — how near,
Yet not to be attained!

"Silence!" the brave Commander cried:
To that calm word a shriek replied,
It was the last death-shriek.
— A few (my soul oft sees that sight)
Survive upon the tall mast's height;
But one dear remnant of the night —
For Him in vain I seek.

Six weeks beneath the moving sea
He lay in slumber quietly;
Unforced by wind or wave
To quit the Ship for which he died,
(All claims of duty satisfied);
And there they found him at her side;
And bore him to the grave.

Vain service! yet not vainly done
For this, if other end were none,
That He, who had been cast
Upon a way of life unmeet
For such a gentle Soul and sweet,
Should find an undisturbed retreat
Near what he loved, at last —

That neighbourhood of grove and field
To Him a resting-place should yield,
A meek man and a brave!
The birds shall sing and ocean make
A mournful murmur for *his* sake;
And Thou, sweet Flower, shalt sleep and wake
Upon his senseless grave.

ELEGIAC VERSES

IN MEMORY OF MY BROTHER, JOHN WORDSWORTH,

Commander of the E. I. Company's ship The Earl of Abergavenny, *in which he perished by calamitous shipwreck, Feb.* 6, 1805.[1]

I

THE Sheep-boy whistled loud, and lo!
That instant, startled by the shock,
The Buzzard mounted from the rock
Deliberate and slow:

[1] Composed near the Mountain track that leads from Grasmere through Grisdale Hawes, where it descends towards Paterdale.

"Here did we stop; and here looked round,
While each into himself descends."

The point is two or three yards below the outlet of Grisdale tarn, on a foot-road by which a horse may pass to Paterdale — a ridge of Helvellyn on the left, and the summit of Fairfield on the right. (Wordsworth's Note.)

Lord of the air, he took his flight;
Oh! could he on that woeful night
Have lent his wing, my Brother dear,
For one poor moment's space to Thee,
And all who struggled with the Sea,
When safety was so near.

II

Thus in the weakness of my heart
I spoke (but let that pang be still)
When rising from the rock at will,
I saw the Bird depart.
And let me calmly bless the Power
That meets me in this unknown Flower.
Affecting type of him I mourn!
With calmness suffer and believe,
And grieve, and know that I must grieve,
Not cheerless, though forlorn.

III

Here did we stop; and here looked round
While each into himself descends,
For that last thought of parting Friends
That is not to be found.
Hidden was Grasmere Vale from sight,
Our home and his, his heart's delight,
His quiet heart's selected home.
But time before him melts away,
And he hath feeling of a day
Of blessedness to come.

GRISEDALE Tarn and Pass, with Ullswater in distance ; from Seat Sandal.

"Here did we stop ; and here looked round
While each into himself descends,
For that last thought of parting Friends
That is not to be found."

— **Elegiac Verses, p. 182.**

IV

Full soon in sorrow did I weep,
Taught that the mutual hope was dust,
In sorrow, but for higher trust,
How miserably deep!
All vanished in a single word,
A breath, a sound, and scarcely heard:
Sea — Ship — drowned — Shipwreck — so it came,
The meek, the brave, the good, was gone;
He who had been our living John
Was nothing but a name.

V

That was indeed a parting! oh,
Glad am I, glad that it is past;
For there were some on whom it cast
Unutterable woe.
But they as well as I have gains; —
From many a humble source, to pains
Like these, there comes a mild release;
Even here I feel it, even this Plant
Is in its beauty ministrant
To comfort and to peace.

VI

He would have loved thy modest grace,
Meek Flower! To Him I would have said,
"It grows upon its native bed
Beside our Parting-place;

There, cleaving to the ground, it lies
With multitude of purple eyes,
Spangling a cushion green like moss;
But we will see it, joyful tide!
Some day, to see it in its pride,
The mountain will we cross."

VII

— Brother and Friend, if verse of mine
Have power to make thy virtues known,
Here let a monumental Stone
Stand — sacred as a Shrine; [1]
And to the few who pass this way,
Traveller or Shepherd, let it say,
Long as these mighty rocks endure, —
Oh do not Thou too fondly brood,
Although deserving of all good,
On any earthly hope, however pure!

ELEGIAC STANZAS

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE, IN A STORM, PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT [2]

I WAS thy neighbour once, thou rugged Pile!
Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee:
I saw thee every day; and all the while
Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

[1] In accordance with this wish, the Wordsworth Society has caused a memorial panel to be placed here, with inscription from this poem.

[2] This picture still hangs in Coleorton Hall. Peele Castle is situated on a small rocky island just off the coast of the Isle of Man.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air!
So like, so very like, was day to day!
Whene'er I looked, thy Image still was there;
It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm! it seemed no sleep;
No mood, which season takes away, or brings:
I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.

Ah! THEN, if mine had been the Painter's hand,
To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile
Amid a world how different from this!
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss.

Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-house divine
Of peaceful years; a chronicle of heaven; —
Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease,
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
Such Picture would I at that time have made:
And seen the soul of truth in every part,
A stedfast peace that might not be betrayed.

So once it would have been, — 't is so no more;
I have submitted to a new control:
A power is gone, which nothing can restore;
A deep distress hath humanised my Soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been:
The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;
This, which I know, I speak with mind serene.

Then, Beaumont, Friend! who would have been the Friend,
If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,
This work of thine I blame not, but commend;
This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

O 't is a passionate Work! — yet wise and well,
Well chosen is the spirit that is here;
That Hulk which labours in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear!

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

THE River Rothay, Grasmere.

" This stream of name more dear
Since thou dost bear it."
— To Rotha Q——, p. 189.

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,
Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind!
Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied; for 't is surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be borne!
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here. —
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

POEMS RELATING TO THE ROTHA

"BROOK! WHOSE SOCIETY THE POET SEEKS"[1]

Brook! whose society the Poet seeks,
Intent his wasted spirits to renew;
And whom the curious Painter doth pursue
Through rocky passes, among flowery creeks,
And tracks thee dancing down thy water-breaks;
If wish were mine some type of thee to view,
Thee, and not thee thyself, I would not do
Like Grecian Artists, give thee human cheeks,
Channels for tears; no Naiad shouldst thou be, —
Have neither limbs, feet, feathers, joints nor hairs:
It seems the Eternal Soul is clothed in thee
With purer robes than those of flesh and blood,
And hath bestowed on thee a safer good;
Unwearied joy, and life without its cares.

[1] The Rotha, or its tributary Easedale Beck, by the side of which Wordsworth said he had composed thousands of verses.

LINES[1]

Loud is the Vale! the Voice is up
With which she speaks when storms are gone,
A mighty unison of streams!
Of all her Voices, One!

Loud is the Vale; — this inland Depth
In peace is roaring like the Sea;
Yon star upon the mountain top
Is listening quietly.

Sad was I, even to pain deprest,
Importunate and heavy load!
The Comforter hath found me here,
Upon this lonely road;

And many thousands now are sad —
Wait the fulfilment of their fear;
For he must die who is their stay,
Their glory disappear.

A Power is passing from the earth
To breathless Nature's dark abyss;
But when the great and good depart
What is it more than this —

[1] Composed at Grasmere, during a walk one Evening, after a stormy day, the Author having just read in a Newspaper that the dissolution of Mr Fox was hourly expected. (Wordsworth's Note.)

That Man, who is from God sent forth,
Doth yet again to God return? —
Such ebb and flow must ever be,
Then wherefore should we mourn?

TO ROTHA Q——[1]

Rotha, my Spiritual Child! this head was grey
When at the sacred font for thee I stood;
Pledged till thou reach the verge of womanhood,
And shalt become thy own sufficient stay:
Too late, I feel, sweet Orphan! was the day
For stedfast hope the contract to fulfil;
Yet shall my blessing hover o'er thee still,
Embodied in the music of this Lay,
Breathed forth beside the peaceful mountain Stream
Whose murmur soothed thy languid Mother's ear
After her throes, this Stream of name more dear
Since thou dost bear it, — a memorial theme
For others; for thy future self, a spell
To summon fancies out of Time's dark cell.

TO ——, IN HER SEVENTIETH YEAR[2].

Such age how beautiful! O Lady bright,
Whose mortal lineaments seem all refined
By favouring Nature and a saintly Mind
To something purer and more exquisite

[1] Rotha Quillinan, Wordsworth's goddaughter.

[2] Lady Fitzgerald, as described to me by Lady Beaumont. (Wordsworth's Note.)

Than flesh and blood; whene'er thou meet'st my sight
When I behold thy blanched unwithered cheek,
Thy temples fringed with locks of gleaming white,
And head that droops because the soul is meek,
Thee with the welcome Snowdrop I compare;
That child of winter, prompting thoughts that climb
From desolation toward the genial prime;
Or with the Moon conquering earth's misty air,
And filling more and more with crystal light
As pensive Evening deepens into night.

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

GRASMERE, October 17, 1805.

. . . . . .

And now I am brought to the sentiment which occasioned this detail; I may say, brought back to my subject, which is this, — that all just and solid pleasure in natural objects rests upon two pillars, God and Man. Laying out grounds, as it is called, may be considered as a liberal art, in some sort like poetry and painting;[1] and its object, like that of all the liberal arts, is, or ought to be, to move the affections under the control of good sense; that is, of the best and wisest. Speaking with more precision, it is to assist Nature in moving the affections, and surely, as I have said, the affections of those who have the deepest perception of the beauty of Nature, who have the most

[1] Sir George Beaumont was planning changes to beautify his estate at Coleorton. Wordsworth's genius for landscape gardening was scarcely second to his genius for poetry, as was shown later.

ON the River Rothay, Grasmere.

"Loud is the Vale: — this inland Depth
In peace is roaring like the Sea;
Yon Star upon the mountain top
Is listening quietly."

— Lines, p. 188.

valuable feelings, — that is, the most permanent, the most independent, the most ennobling, connected with Nature and human life. No liberal art aims merely at the gratification of an individual or a class: the painter or poet is degraded in proportion as he does so; the true servants of the Arts pay homage to the human kind as impersonated in unwarped and enlightened minds. If this be so when we are merely putting together words or colours, how much more ought the feeling to prevail when we are in the midst of the realities of things; of the beauty and harmony, of the joy and happiness, of living creatures; of men and children, of birds and beasts, of hills and streams, and trees and flowers; with the changes of night and day, evening and morning, summer and winter; and all their unwearied actions and energies, as benign in the spirit that animates them as they are beautiful and grand in that form and clothing which is given to them for the delight of our senses!

But I must stop, for you feel these things as deeply as I; more deeply, if it were only for this, that you have lived longer. What then shall we say of many great mansions with their unqualified expulsion of human creatures from their neighbourhood, happy or not; houses, which do what is fabled of the upas-tree, that they breathe out death and desolation! I know you will feel with me here, both as a man, and a lover and professor of the Arts. I was glad to hear from Lady Beaumont that you did not think of removing your village. Of course, much here will depend upon circumstances, above all, with what kind of inhabitants, from the nature of the employments in that

district, the village is likely to be stocked. But for my part, strip my neighbourhood of human beings, and I should think it one of the greatest privations I could undergo. You have all the poverty of solitude, nothing of its elevation. In a word, if I were disposed to write a sermon (and this is something like one) upon the subject of taste in natural beauty, I should take for my text the little pathway in Lowther Woods, and all which I had to say would begin and end in the human heart, as under the direction of Divine Nature, conferring value on the objects of the senses, and pointing out what is valuable in them.

YEW-TREES

THERE is a Yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,
Which to this day stands single, in the midst
Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore;
Not loth to furnish weapons for the bands
Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched
To Scotland's heaths; or those that crossed the sea
And drew their sounding bows at Azincour,
Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poictiers.
Of vast circumference and gloom profound
This solitary Tree! a living thing
Produced too slowly ever to decay;
Of form and aspect too magnificent
To be destroyed. But worthier still of note
Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,[1]

[1] The Borrowdale "Four," as well as the Lorton Yew, are mere wrecks of their former selves.

Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
Huge trunks! and each particular trunk a growth
Of intertwisted fibres serpentine
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;
Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks
That threaten the profane; — a pillared shade,
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
Perennially — beneath whose sable roof
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked
With unrejoicing berries — ghostly Shapes
May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope,
Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton
And Time the Shadow; — there to celebrate,
As in a natural temple scattered o'er
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
United worship; or in mute repose
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

WRITTEN IN MARCH

WHILE RESTING ON THE BRIDGE AT THE FOOT OF BROTHER'S WATER

The Cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun;

The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising;
There are forty feeding like one!

Like an army defeated
The snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill;
The ploughboy is whooping — anon — anon:
There 's joy in the mountains;
There 's life in the fountains;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing;
The rain is over and gone!

PERSONAL TALK

I

I AM not One who much or oft delight
To season my fireside with personal talk.—
Of friends, who live within an easy walk,
Or neighbours, daily, weekly, in my sight:
And, for my chance-acquaintance, ladies bright,
Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,
These all wear out of me, like Forms, with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast-night.
Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence, square with my desire;

LOWER Room in Dove Cottage ; sometimes occupied as a sleeping-room by S. T. Coleridge during his long visits.

" To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage-fire."

—Personal Talk, p. 195.

To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage-fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint undersong.

II

"Yet life," you say, "is life; we have seen and see,
And with a living pleasure we describe;
And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
The languid mind into activity.
Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and glee
Are fostered by the comment and the gibe."
Even be it so; yet still among your tribe,
Our daily world's true Worldlings, rank not me!
Children are blest, and powerful; their world lies
More justly balanced; partly at their feet,
And part far from them: sweetest melodies
Are those that are by distance made more sweet;
Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
He is a Slave; the meanest we can meet!

III

Wings have we, — and as far as we can go,
We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,

Matter wherein right voluble I am,
To which I listen with a ready ear;
Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear, —
The gentle Lady married to the Moor;
And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb.

IV

Nor can I not believe but that hereby
Great gains are mine; for thus I live remote
From evil-speaking; rancour, never sought,
Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie.
Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought:
And thus from day to day my little boat
Rocks in its harbour, lodging peaceably.
Blessings be with them — and eternal praise,[1]
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares —
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!
Oh! might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

ADMONITION

Well may'st thou halt — and gaze with brightening eye!
The lovely Cottage in the guardian nook
Hath stirred thee deeply; with its own dear brook,
Its own small pasture, almost its own sky!
But covet not the Abode; — forbear to sigh,

[1] The pedestal of Wordsworth's statue in Westminster bears these lines.

As many do, repining while they look;
Intruders — who would tear from Nature's book
This precious leaf, with harsh impiety.
Think what the home must be if it were thine,
Even thine, though few thy wants! — Roof, window, door,
The very flowers are sacred to the Poor,
The roses to the porch which they entwine:
Yea, all, that now enchants thee, from the day
On which it should be touched, would melt away.

"BELOVED VALE!"[1] I SAID, "WHEN I SHALL CON"

"Beloved Vale!" I said, "when I shall con
Those many records of my childish years,
Remembrance of myself and of my peers
Will press me down: to think of what is gone
Will be an awful thought, if life have one."
But when into the vale I came, no fears
Distressed me; from mine eyes escaped no tears;
Deep thought, or dread remembrance, had I none.
By doubts and thousand petty fancies crost
I stood, of simple shame the blushing Thrall;
So narrow seemed the brooks, the fields so small!
A Juggler's balls old Time about him tossed;
I looked, I stared, I smiled, I laughed; and all
The weight of sadness was in wonder lost.

[1] Hawkshead.

"THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US; LATE AND SOON"

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not. — Great God! I 'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

TO SLEEP!

THREE SONNETS

I

O gentle Sleep! do they belong to thee,
These twinklings of oblivion? Thou dost love
To sit in meekness, like the brooding Dove,
A captive never wishing to be free.
This tiresome night, O Sleep! thou art to me
A fly that up and down himself doth shove
Upon a fretful rivulet, now above
Now on the water vexed with mockery.

I have no pain that calls for patience, no;
Hence am I cross and peevish as a child:
Am pleased by fits to have thee for my foe,
Yet ever willing to be reconciled:
O gentle Creature! do not use me so,
But once and deeply let me be beguiled.

II

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;
I have thought of all by turns, and yet do lie
Sleepless! and soon the small bird's melodies
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees;
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:
So do not let me wear to-night away:
Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blessed barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

III

FOND words have oft been spoken to thee, Sleep!
And thou hast had thy store of tenderest names;
The very sweetest, Fancy culls or frames,
When thankfulness of heart is strong and deep!
Dear Bosom-child we call thee, that dost steep
In rich reward all suffering; Balm that tames
All anguish; Saint that evil thoughts and aims

Takest away, and into souls dost creep,
Like to a breeze from heaven. Shall I alone,
I surely not a man ungently made,
Call thee worst Tyrant by which Flesh is crost?
Perverse, self-willed to own and to disown,
Mere slave of them who never for thee prayed,
Still last to come where thou art wanted most!

SONNETS OF PATRIOTISM

IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802[1]

O Friend! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
To think that now our life is only drest
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom! — We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:

[1] This was written immediately after my return from France to London, when I could not but be struck, as here described, with the vanity and parade of our own country, especially in great towns and cities, as contrasted with the quiet, and I may say the desolation, that the revolution had produced in France. This must be borne in mind, or else the reader may think that in this and the succeeding Sonnets I have exaggerated the mischief engendered and fostered among us by undisturbed wealth. (Wordsworth's Note.)

ON the River Rothay, Grasmere.

"Bleak season was it, turbulent and bleak,
When hitherward we journeyed side by side
. . . . . The naked trees,
The icy brooks, as on we passed, appeared
To question us, "Whence come ye, to what end?"

— The Recluse, p. 128.

The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

LONDON, 1802

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

"GREAT MEN HAVE BEEN AMONG US"

Great men have been among us; hands that penned
And tongues that uttered wisdom — better none:
The later Sidney, Marvel, Harrington,
Young Vane, and others who called Milton friend.
These moralists could act and comprehend:
They knew how genuine glory was put on;
Taught us how rightfully a nation shone

In splendour: what strength was, that would not bend
But in magnanimous meekness. France, 't is strange,
Hath brought forth no such souls as we had then.
Perpetual emptiness! unceasing change!
No single volume paramount, no code,
No master spirit, no determined road;
But equally a want of books and men!

"IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF"

It is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood,"
Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands
Should perish; and to evil and to good
Be lost forever. In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakspeare spake; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held. — In everything we are sprung
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

"WHEN I HAVE BORNE IN MEMORY"

When I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
The student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed

I had, my country! — am I to be blamed?
Now, when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
For dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men:
And I by my affection was beguiled:
What wonder if a Poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child!

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, SEPT. 3, 1802[1]

Earth has not anything to show more fair;
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

[1] Written on the roof of a coach, on my way to France. (Wordsworth's Note.)

TO THE CUCKOO

O BLITHE New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear,
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

THE Borrowdale Yews; west of Keswick.

". . . . fraternal Four of Borrowdale,
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
Huge trunks! and each particular trunk a growth
Of intertwisted fibres serpentine."

—Yew Trees, p. 192.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessèd Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for Thee!

TO A SKY-LARK

(1805)

Up with me! up with me into the clouds!
For thy song, Lark, is strong;
Up with me, up with me into the clouds!
Singing, singing,
With clouds and sky about thee ringing,
Lift me, guide me till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind!

I have walked through wildernesses dreary
And to-day my heart is weary;
Had I now the wings of a Faery,
Up to thee would I fly.
There is madness about thee, and joy divine
In that song of thine;
Lift me, guide me high and high
To thy banqueting-place in the sky.

Joyous as morning
Thou art laughing and scorning;
Thou hast a nest for thy love and thy rest,
And, though little troubled with sloth,
Drunken Lark! thou wouldst be loth
To be such a traveller as I.
Happy, happy Liver,
With a soul as strong as a mountain river
Pouring out praise to the Almighty Giver,
Joy and jollity be with us both!

Alas! my journey, rugged and uneven,
Through prickly moors or dusty ways must wind:
But hearing thee, or others of thy kind,
As full of gladness and as free of heaven,
I, with my fate contented, will plod on,
And hope for higher raptures, when life's day is done.

TO A SKY-LARK

(1825)

Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine;
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood

Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!

"O NIGHTINGALE! THOU SURELY ART"

O Nightingale! thou surely art
A creature of a "fiery heart": —
These notes of thine — they pierce and pierce;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce!
Thou sing'st as if the God of wine
Had helped thee to a Valentine;
A song in mockery and despite
Of shades, and dews, and silent night;
And steady bliss, and all the loves
Now sleeping in those peaceful groves.

I heard a Stock-dove sing or say
His homely tale, this very day;
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze:
He did not cease; but cooed — and cooed;
And somewhat pensively he wooed:
He sang of love, with quiet blending,
Slow to begin and never ending;
Of serious faith, and inward glee;
That was the song — the song for me!

"PELION AND OSSA FLOURISH SIDE BY SIDE"

Pelion and Ossa flourish side by side,
Together in immortal books enrolled:
His ancient dower Olympus hath not sold;
And that inspiring Hill, which "did divide
Into two ample horns his forehead wide,"
Shines with poetic radiance as of old;
While not an English Mountain we behold
By the celestial Muses glorified.
Yet round our sea-girt shore they rise in crowds:
What was the great Parnassus' self to Thee,
Mount Skiddaw? In his natural sovereignty
Our British Hill is nobler far; he shrouds
His double front among Atlantic clouds,
And pours forth streams more sweet than Castaly.

TO LADY BEAUMONT FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH [1]

Grasmere, July 9th, 1806, Monday.

My dear Friend, — . . . In the first place, then, we seem to have no other spot to turn to, for there is not a house in this neighbourhood; and our continuing here during another winter would be attended with so many

[1] In reply to a letter placing the Coleorton farm-house at the disposal of the Wordsworths. Coleorton Hall was in process of rebuilding, and the Beaumonts were at their town house in London or elsewhere, for the time being. Early in the Fall of 1806, the Wordsworths settled in the farm-house and remained there nearly a year.

DERWENTWATER and Mt. Skiddaw.

"What was the great Parnassus' self to Thee,
Mount Skiddaw? In his natural sovereignty
Our British Hill is nobler far; he shrouds
His double front among Atlantic clouds,
And pours forth streams more sweet than Castaly."

— Pelion and Ossa, p. 208.

serious inconveniences, especially to my brother, who has no quiet corner in which to pursue his studies, no room but that where we all sit . . . that we feel that nothing short of absolute impossibility should prevent us from moving. Ever since my brother's return from London, we have thought about our removal to Coleorton as the only scheme in our power; but I abstained from speaking of it to you, thinking that at our meeting all things might be better explained. The solitude would be no evil to us with such a treasure of books, and even the dirty roads a trifling one, the house being so large that it would not be irksome or unhealthful to be confined there in rainy weather. There is but one circumstance which casts a damp upon our prospects . . . the being in your house and you not there; so near you, as it were, and not enjoying your society. On this account, . . . if any house should become vacant in this neighbourhood before the beginning of winter, of course it would be desirable to take it, and defer our journey till the end of next summer, when you will be there also — for I hope there will be no further delay in the finishing of your building. . . .

TO LADY BEAUMONT FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[1806.]

. . . . . .

I have put off writing to you for many days, hoping always that the next post would bring us a letter from Coleridge himself, from which some comfort might be

gathered, and a more accurate estimate formed of the state of his mind. But no letter has arrived. I have, however, the satisfaction of telling you that he is to be at home on the 29th of this month. He has written to acquaint Mrs Coleridge with this, and has told her that he has some notion of giving a course of lectures in London in the winter. This is all we know; I do not imagine he has mentioned the subject of the lectures to Mrs C. Whatever his plan may be, I confess I very much wish he may not put it in practice, and for many reasons: first, because I fear his health would suffer from late hours, and being led too much into company; and, in the second place, I would fain see him address the whole powers of his soul to some great work in prose or verse, of which the effect would be permanent, and not personal and transitory. I do not mean to say that much permanent good may not be produced by communicating knowledge by means of lectures, but a man is perpetually tempted to lower himself to his hearers, to bring them into sympathy with him, and no one would be more likely to yield to such temptation than Coleridge; therefore at every period of his life the objection would have applied to his devoting himself to this employment. But at this present time it seems almost necessary that he should have one grand object before him, which would turn his thoughts away in a steady course from his own unhappy lot, and so prevent petty irritations and distresses, and in the end produce a habit of reconcilement and submission.

My dear friend, you will judge how much we have suffered from anxiety and distress within the few last weeks.

We have long known how unfit Coleridge and his wife were for each other; but we had hoped that his ill-health, and the present need his children have of his care and fatherly instructions, and the reflections of his own mind during this long absence would have so wrought upon him that he might have returned home with comfort, ready to partake of the blessings of friendship, which he surely has in an abundant degree, and to devote himself to his studies and his children. I now trust he has brought himself into this state of mind, but as we have had no letters from him since that miserable one which we received a short time before my brother mentioned the subject to Sir George, I do not know what his views are. Poor soul! he had a struggle of many years, striving to bring Mrs C. to a change of temper, and something like communion with him in his enjoyments. He is now, I trust, effectually convinced that he has no power of this sort, and he has had so long a time to know and feel this, that I would gladly hope things will not be so bad as he imagines when he finds himself once again with his children under his own roof. If he *can* make use of the knowledge which he has of the utter impossibility of producing powers and qualities of mind which are not in her, or of much changing what is unsuitable to his disposition, I do not think he will be unhappy; I am sure I think he ought not to be *miserable*. While he imagined he had anything to hope for, no wonder that his perpetual disappointments made him so! But suppose him once reconciled to that one great want, an utter want of sympathy, I believe he may live in peace and quiet. Mrs C. has many excellent qualities,

as you observe, . . . and I believe she would have made an excellent wife to many persons. Coleridge is as little fitted for her as she for him, and I am truly sorry for her. When we meet you at Coleorton, I trust we shall have been with Coleridge long enough to know what comfort he is likely to have. In the meantime, I will say no more on this distressing subject, unless some change should happen much for the better or the worse. I hope everything from the effect of my brother's conversation upon Coleridge's mind; and bitterly do I regret that he did not at first go to London to meet him, as I think he might have roused him up, and preserved him from much of the misery that he has endured. . . . We think that nothing will prevent our accepting your kind offer; for it is plain that Coleridge does not wish us to go to Keswick, as he has not replied to that part of William's letter in which he spoke of our plans for the winter. We shall, therefore, prepare ourselves to be ready to set off at any time that you shall appoint. . . .

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

Coleorton, Nov. 10, 1806.

. . . . . .

Miss Hutchinson and I were at church yesterday. We were pleased with the singing; and I have often heard a far worse parson — I mean as to reading. His sermon was, to be sure, as village sermons often are, very injudicious. . . . I don't know that I ever heard in a country pulpit a sermon that had any special bearing on the condition of the

majority of the audience. I was sorry to see at Coleorton few middle-aged men, or even women; the congregation consisted almost entirely of old persons, particularly old men, and boys and girls. . . . I have talked much chit-chat. I have chosen to do this rather than give way to my feelings, which were powerfully called out by your affecting and beautiful letter. I will say this, and this only, that I esteem your friendship one of the best gifts of my life. I and my family owe much to you and Lady Beaumont. I need not say that I do not mean any additions to our comfort or happiness. . . . I speak of soul indebted to soul. . . . In a day or two I mean to send a sheet of my intended volume to the press; it would give me pleasure to desire the printer to send you the sheets as they are struck off if you could have them free of expense. There is no forming a true estimate of a volume of *small* poems by reading them all together; one stands in the way of the other. They must either be read a few at once, or the book must remain some time by one, before a judgment can be made of the quantity of thought and feeling and imagery it contains, and what, and what variety of moods of mind, it can either impart, or is suited to.

My sister is writing to Lady Beaumont, and will tell her how comfortable we are here, and everything relating thereto. Alas! we have had no tidings of Coleridge — a certain proof that he continues to be very unhappy. Farewell my dear friend.— Most faithfully and affectionately yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

TO LADY BEAUMONT FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

Coleorton, Friday, 15th November.

My dear Friend, — We like the place more and more every day, for every day we find fresh comfort in having a roomy house. The sitting-room, where by the fireside we have seen some glorious sunsets, we far more than like — we already *love* it. These sunsets are a gift of our new residence, for shut up as we are among the mountains in our small deep valley, we have but a glimpse of the glory of the evening through one gap called the Dunmail Gap, the inverted arch which you pass through in going to Keswick. On Wednesday evening my brother and I walked backwards and forwards under the trees near the hall just after the sun was gone down, and we felt as if we were admitted to a new delight. From the horizon's edge to a great height the sky was covered with rosy clouds, and I cannot conceive anything more beautiful and glorious and solemn than this light seen through the trees, and the majestic trees themselves; and afterwards, when we went lower down, and had the church spire and your new house backed by the west, they had a very fine effect. We continued to walk till the sky was gloomy all over, and two lights (we supposed from coal-pits) on the hill opposite to the hall, where the grove stands whither you want to decoy the rooks, were left to shine with full effect, and they looked very wild. . . . Mr Craig has planted honeysuckles beside the pillars at the door. . . . We have requested him to plant some of the clematis or travellers'

BROUGHAM Castle on River Emont.

"Armour rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls."

— Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle, p. 233.

joy, a plant which is very beautiful, especially by moonlight in winter, grows rapidly, and makes a delicious bower. What above all things I delight in is the piece of ground you have chosen for your winter garden; the hillocks and slopes, and the hollow shape of the whole, will make it a perfect wilderness when the trees get up. . . . My brother works very hard at his poems, preparing them for the press. Miss Hutchinson is the transcriber. She also orders dinner, and attends to the kitchen; so that the labour being so divided we have all plenty of leisure. . . . I do not understand anything by that line of Michael Angelo but this, that he, seeing in the expression and light of her eye so much of the divine nature, — that is, receiving from thence such an assurance of the divine nature being in her — he felt therefrom a more confirmed belief or sentiment or sensation of the divinity of his own, and was thereby purified. . . .

I have kept back from speaking of Coleridge, for what can I say? We have had no letter, though we have written again. You shall hear of it when he writes to us.

TO LADY BEAUMONT FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

November 17th, 1806.

. . . I do not know what to say to you about poor Coleridge. We have had four letters from him, and in all he speaks with the same steadiness of his resolution to separate from Mrs C., and she has fully agreed to it, and consented that he should take Hartley and Derwent, and

superintend their education, she being allowed to have them at the holidays. I say she has agreed to the separation, but in a letter which we have received to-night he tells us that she breaks out into outrageous passions, and urges continually that one argument (in fact the only one which has the least effect upon her mind), that this person, and that person, and everybody will talk. . . . He says: "If I go away without them I am a bird who has struggled himself from off a bird-lime twig, and then finds a string round his leg pulling him back." My brother has written to advise him to bring the boys to us. . . . I hope my brother's letter will make him determined to come with them here, and that I shall have to tell you that they are here before the end of this week.

. . . . . .

William has written two other poems, which you will see when they are printed. He composes frequently in the grove, and Mr Gray is going to put him up a bench under the hollies. We have not yet received a sheet from the printer. . . . William and I went to Grâce Dieu[1] last week. We were enchanted with the little valley, and its rocks, and the rocks of Charnwood upon the hill, on which we rested for a long time. Adieu, my dear friend. . . . Yours ever,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

[1] An old nunnery in Charnwood Forest.

TO LADY BEAUMONT FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

December 22, 1806.

My dear Friend, — We are in expectation every moment of poor Coleridge and his son Hartley. They were to leave Kendal on Wednesday, and if they had come as quickly as my brother and Miss H., they would have been here last night. C. says that Mrs Coleridge intends removing southward in the spring, and is to meet him in London with Derwent, who till that time is to stay with her. . . . He writes calmly and in better spirits. Mrs C. had been outrageous; but for the last two or three days she had become more quiet, and appeared to be tolerably reconciled to his arrangements. I had a letter from her last week — a strange letter! She wrote just as if all things were going on as usual, and we knew nothing of the intentions of Coleridge. She gives but a very gloomy account of Coleridge's health, but this in her old way, without the least feeling or sense of his sufferings. I do think, indeed, that the state of his health will absolutely prevent him from lecturing. It is a sad pity that he did not formally decline accepting the proposal, as I believe his heart was never in it, and nothing but the dreamy and miserable state of his mind (which prevented him from *doing* anything) kept him from saying that he would *not* lecture. . . .

TO LADY BEAUMONT FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

COLEORTON, December 23, 1806.

. . . . . .

Coleridge and his son Hartley arrived on Sunday afternoon. My dear Lady Beaumont, the pleasure of welcoming him to your house mingled with our joy, and I think I never was more happy in my life than when we had had him an hour by the fireside: for his looks were much more like his own old self, and though we only talked of common things, and of our friends, we perceived that he was contented in his mind, and had settled things at home to his satisfaction. He has been tolerably well and cheerful ever since, and has begun with his books. Hartley, poor boy! is very happy, and looks uncommonly well. . . . I long to know your opinion and Sir George's of my brother's plan of the winter garden.[1] Coleridge (as we females are also) is much delighted with it, only he *doubts* about the fountain, and he thinks it is possible that an intermingling of birch trees somewhere, on account of the richness of the colour of the naked twigs in winter, might be an advantage; I may add also from myself, that we have often stood for half an hour together at Grasmere, on a still

[1] By invitation of Lady Beaumont, Wordsworth had undertaken to construct a winter garden out of an old quarry not far from the manor. The "plan" here alluded to was carried out, and is now, after the lapse of one hundred years, one of the most beautiful winter gardens in the world. The estate of Coleorton is near Ashby-de-la-Zouch in Leicestershire, and is an interesting spot to Wordsworth lovers, for its memorials of the poet's residence there.

morning, to look at the raindrops or hoar-frost glittering in sunshine upon the birch twigs; the purple colour and the sparkling drops produce a most enchanting effect. . . . God bless you, my kind good friend. We shall drink a health to you on Christmas Day. You may remember that it is my birthday; but in my inner heart it is never a day of jollity. — Believe me, ever yours,

D. Wordsworth.

TO LADY BEAUMONT

Coleorton, May 21, 1807.

. . . . . .

It is impossible that any expectations can be lower than mine concerning the immediate effect of this little work[1] upon what is called "the public." I do not here take into consideration the envy and malevolence, and all the bad passions which always stand in the way of a work of any merit from a living poet; but merely think of the pure absolute honest ignorance, in which all worldlings of every rank and situation must be enveloped, with respect to the thoughts, feelings, and images, on which the life of my poems depends. The things which I have taken, whether from within or without, what they have to do with routs, dinners, morning calls, hurry from door to door, from street to street, on foot or in carriage; with Mr Pitt or Mr Fox, Mr Paul or Sir Francis Burdett, the Westminster election or the borough of Honiton? In a word — for I cannot stop to make my way through the hurry of

[1] A collection of his own poems in two volumes just published by the Longmans.

images that present themselves to me, — what have they to do with endless talking about things nobody cares anything for, except as far as their own vanity is concerned, and this with persons they care nothing for but as their vanity or *selfishness* is concerned? what have they to do — to say all at once — with a life without love? In such a life there can be no thought; for we have no thought (save thoughts of pain) but as far as we have love and admiration.

It is an awful truth that there neither is, nor can be, any genuine enjoyment of poetry among nineteen out of twenty of those persons who live, or wish to live, in the broad light of the world — among those who either are, or are striving to make themselves, people of consideration in society. This is a truth, and an awful one, because to be incapable of a feeling of poetry, in my sense of the word, is to be without love of human nature, and reverence for God.

Upon this I shall insist elsewhere; at present let me confine myself to my object, which is to make you, my dear friend, as easy-hearted as myself with respect to these poems. Trouble not yourself about their present reception; of what moment is that compared with what I trust is their destiny? to console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight, by making the happy happier; to teach the young, and the gracious of every age, to see, to think, and feel, and therefore to become more actively and securely virtuous — this is their office, which I trust they will faithfully perform, long after we (that is, all that is mortal of us) are mouldered in our graves.

BRIMMER Head Bridge, Grasmere.

" Where peace to Grasmere's lonely island leads,
To willowy hedge-rows, and to emerald meads;
Leads to her bridge, rude church, and cottaged grounds,
Her rocky sheepwalks, and her woodland bounds."

—An Evening Walk, p. 9.

I am well aware how far it would seem to many that I overrate my own exertions, when I speak in this way, in direct connection with the volume I have just made public.

. . . . . .

My letter (as this second sheet which I am obliged to take admonishes me) is growing to an enormous length; and yet, saying that I have expressed my calm confidence that these poems will live, I have said nothing which has a particular application to the object of it, which was to remove all disquiet from your mind on account of the condemnation they may at present incur from that portion of my contemporaries who are called the public. I am sure, my dear Lady Beaumont, if you attach any importance to it, it can only be from an apprehension that it may affect me, upon which I have already set you at ease; or from a fear that this present blame is ominous of their future or final destiny. If this be the case, your tenderness for me betrays you. Be assured that the decision of these persons has nothing to do with the question; they are altogether incompetent judges. These people, in the senseless hurry of their idle lives, do not *read* books, they merely snatch a glance at them, that they may talk about them. And even if this were not so, never forget what, I believe, was observed to you by Coleridge, that every great and original writer, in proportion as he is great or original, must himself create the taste by which he is to be relished; he must teach the art by which he is to be seen; this, in a certain degree, even to all persons, however wise and pure may be their lives, and however unvitiated their taste. But for those who dip into books in order to give an opinion of

them, or talk about them to take up an opinion — for this multitude of unhappy, and misguided and misguiding beings — an entire regeneration must be produced; and if this be possible, it must be a work of *time*. To conclude, my ears are stone-dead to this idle buzz, and my flesh as insensible as iron to these petty stings; and, after all that I have said, I am sure yours will be the same. I doubt not that you will share with me an invincible confidence that my writings (and among them these little poems) will coöperate with the benign tendencies in human nature and society, wherever found; and that they will, in their degree, be efficacious in making men wiser, better, and happier. Farewell. I will not apologise for this letter, though its length demands an apology. — Believe me, eagerly wishing for the happy day when I shall see you and Sir George here, most affectionately yours,

W. Wordsworth.

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

[1807.]

My dear Sir George, — I am quite delighted to hear of your picture for *Peter Bell;* I was much pleased with the sketch, and I have no doubt that the picture will surpass it as far as a picture ought to do. I long much to see it. I should approve of any engraver approved by you. But remember that no poem of mine will ever be popular; and I am afraid that the sale of "Peter" would not carry the expense of the engraving, and that the poem, in the

estimation of the public, would be a weight upon the print. I say not this in modest disparagement of the poem, but in sorrow for the sickly taste of the public in verse. The *people* would love the poem of *Peter Bell*, but the *public* (a very different being) will never love it.

. . . . . .

The fact is, the English *public* are at this moment in the same state of mind with respect to my poems, if small things may be compared with great, as the French are in respect to Shakespeare, and not the French alone, but almost the whole Continent. In short, in your friend's letter, I am condemned for the very thing for which I ought to have been praised, viz., — that I have not written down to the level of superficial observers and unthinking minds. Every great poet is a teacher: I wish either to be considered as a teacher, or as nothing.

TO MRS. MARSHALL FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

Allan Bank, December 4, 1808.

. . . . . .

We have grievous troubles to struggle with. A smoky house, wet cellars, and workmen by the half dozen making attempts (hitherto unsuccessful) to remedy these evils. We are making one effort more; and, if that end as heretofore, we shall be reduced to the miserable necessity of quitting Grasmere; for this house is at present literally not habitable, and there is no other in the Vale. You can have no idea of the inconvenience we have suffered. There

was one stormy day in which we could have no fire but in my brother's study, and that chimney smoked so much that we were obliged to go to bed. We cooked in the study. . . . Partly on account of smoke and windy weather, and partly because of the workmen, we have been for more than a week together at different times without a kitchen fire. The servants, you may be sure, have been miserable; and we have had far too much labour, and far too little quiet. . . . At the time of the great storm, Mrs Coleridge and her little girl were here, and Mr Coleridge is with us constantly; so you will make out that we were a pretty large family to provide for in such a manner. Mr Coleridge and his wife are separated; and I hope they will both be the happier for it. They are upon friendly terms, and occasionally see each other. In fact Mrs Coleridge was more than a week at Grasmere under the same roof with him. Coleridge intends to spend the winter with us. On this side of the paper you will find the Prospectus of a work which he is going to undertake; and I have little doubt but that it will be well executed if his health does not fail him; but on that score (though he is well at present) I have many fears.

My brother is deeply engaged writing a pamphlet upon the Convention of Cintra, an event which has interested him more than words can express. His first and his last thoughts are of Spain and Portugal.

TO THOMAS POOLE

GRASMERE, near Kendal, March 30 [1809].

. . . I should be most happy to see Alfoxden, Stowey, and the Quantock Hills and Coombs once more before I close my eyes; but Poetry, you know well, and Patriotism are not mines very affluent in gold ore. At least I do not find them so. Riches, it has often been said, have wings. Of that I seldom think; but sometimes I do think and feel that they *give* wings, and that the gift has not found its way to me; else assuredly you would have seen me under your roof before this time. I mention this partly as matter of regret and partly as good-natured reproach to you, whose shoulders are well fledged and furnished, for having never thought it worth while to fly so far as these mountains. But I am scribbling so wretchedly that you will be unable to read; therefore, to save you any further vexation, I conclude. — Your affectionate friend,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

If you were a married man I should tell you that I have an excellent wife, and four fine children; but you are above these luxuries, as a friend of mine once called them in my hearing; saying that he could not afford to give in to such things, and the rogue meanwhile had pictures and prints in his house to the amount of ten thousand pounds. My sister is well, and begs to be most kindly remembered to you. Do not forget to mention my name to Ward, as one who often has the image of what he was eleven years ago before his eyes. God bless you!

TO LORD LONSDALE

GRASMERE, Feb. 6, 1812.

. . . I need scarcely say that literature has been the pursuit of my life; a life-pursuit, chosen (as I believe are those of most men distinguished by any particular features of character) partly from passionate liking, and partly from calculations of the judgment; and in some small degree from circumstances in which my youth was placed, that threw great difficulties in the way of my adopting that profession to which I was most inclined, and for which I was perhaps best qualified.[1] I long hoped, depending upon my moderate desires, that the profits of my literary labours, added to the little which I possessed, would have answered all the rational wants of myself and my family. But in this I have been disappointed, and for these causes; firstly, the unexpected pressure of the times, falling most heavily upon men who have no regular means of increasing their income in proportion; secondly, I had erroneously calculated upon the degree in which my writings were likely to suit the taste of the times; and lastly, much the most important part of my efforts cannot meet the public eye for many years, from the comprehensiveness of the subject. I may also add (but it is scarcely worth while), a fourth reason, viz.: an utter inability on my part to associate with any class or body of literary men, and thus

[1] "He always fancied that he had talents for command; and he at one time thought of a military life, but then he was without connections, and he felt, if he were ordered to the West Indies, his talents would not save him from the yellow fever, and he gave that up." (Memoirs, II. 466.)

subject myself to the necessity of sacrificing my own judgment, and of lending, even indirectly, countenance or support to principles, either of taste, politics, morals or religion, which I disapprove; and your lordship is not ignorant that, except writers engaged in mere drudgery, there are scarcely any authors but those associated in this manner, who find literature, at this day, an employment attended with pecuniary gain.

The statement of these facts has been made, as your lordship will probably have anticipated, in order that if any office should be at your disposal (the duties of which would not call so largely upon my exertions as to prevent me from giving a considerable portion of time to study), it might be in your lordship's power to place me in a situation where, with better hope of success, I might advance towards the main object of my life, I mean the completion of my literary undertakings; and thereby contribute to the innocent gratification, and perhaps the solid benefit of many of my countrymen.[1]

. . . . . .

I have been emboldened to make this statement from a remembrance that my family has for several generations been honoured by the regard of that of your lordship, and that, in particular, my father and grandfather did, conscientiously I believe, discharge such trusts as were reposed in them from that connection.

. . . . . .

[1] As a result of this letter, Lord Lonsdale procured Wordsworth the office of Distributor of Stamps for the county of Cumberland. He entered upon its duties early in the year 1813, at the time of his removal to Rydal Mount.

SONG AT THE FEAST OF BROUGHAM CASTLE[1]

UPON THE RESTORATION OF LORD CLIFFORD, THE SHEPHERD, TO THE ESTATES AND HONOURS OF HIS ANCESTORS

High in the breathless Hall the Minstrel sate,
And Emont's murmur mingled with the Song. —
The words of ancient time I thus translate,
A festal strain that hath been silent long: —

"From town to town, from tower to tower,
The red rose is a gladsome flower.
Her thirty years of winter past,
The red rose is revived at last;
She lifts her head for endless spring,
For everlasting blossoming:
Both roses flourish, red and white:
In love and sisterly delight
The two that were at strife are blended,
And all old troubles now are ended. —
Joy! joy to both! but most to her
Who is the flower of Lancaster!
Behold her how She smiles to-day
On this great throng, this bright array!

[1] Brougham Castle, about two miles from Penrith, was one of the numerous estates of the Clifford family. The famous "Black Clifford" having been slain by his enemies, his widow, in fear for the life of her infant son, had him brought up in a shepherd's hut, ignorant of his name and race until he was twenty-four years old. Being then restored to his estate and honors, he became known as "The Shepherd Lord."

EASEDALE Tarn.

"Love had he found in huts where poor men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills."

—Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle, p. 234.

Fair greeting doth she send to all
From every corner of the hall;
But chiefly from above the board
Where sits in state our rightful Lord,
A Clifford to his own restored.

They came with banner, spear, and shield,
And it was proved in Bosworth-field.
Not long the avenger was withstood —
Earth helped him with the cry of blood:
St. George was for us, and the might
Of blessed Angels crowned the right.
Loud voice the Land has uttered forth,
We loudest in the faithful north:
Our fields rejoice, our mountains ring,
Our streams proclaim a welcoming;
Our strong-abodes and castles see
The glory of their loyalty.

How glad is Skipton at this hour —
Though lonely, a deserted Tower;
Knight, squire, and yeoman, page and groom:
We have them at the feast of Brough'm.
How glad Pendragon — though the sleep
Of years be on her! — She shall reap
A taste of this great pleasure, viewing
As in a dream her own renewing.
Rejoiced is Brough, right glad I deem
Beside her little humble stream;
And she that keepeth watch and ward
Her statelier Eden's course to guard;

They both are happy at this hour,
Though each is but a lonely Tower: —
But here is perfect joy and pride
For one fair House by Emont's side,
This day, distinguished without peer
To see her Master and to cheer —
Him, and his Lady-mother dear!

Oh! it was a time forlorn
When the fatherless was born —
Give her wings that she may fly,
Or she sees her infant die!
Swords that are with slaughter wild
Hunt the Mother and the Child.
Who will take them from the light?
— Yonder is a man in sight —
Yonder is a house — but where?
No, they must not enter there.
To the caves, and to the brooks,
To the clouds of heaven she looks;
She is speechless, but her eyes
Pray in ghostly agonies.
Blissful Mary, Mother mild,
Maid and Mother undefiled,
Save a Mother and her Child!

Now Who is he that bounds with joy
On Carrock's [1] side, a Shepherd-boy?
No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass
Light as the wind along the grass.

[1] Near Castle Sowerby, Cumberland.

Can this be He who hither came
In secret, like a smothered flame?
O'er whom such thankful tears were shed
For shelter, and a poor man's bread!
God loves the Child; and God hath willed
That those dear words should be fulfilled,
The Lady's words, when forced away,
The last she to her Babe did say:
'My own, my own, thy Fellow-guest
I may not be; but rest thee, rest,
For lowly shepherd's life is best!'

Alas! when evil men are strong
No life is good, no pleasure long.
The Boy must part from Mosedale's groves,
And leave Blencathara's rugged coves,
And quit the flowers that summer brings
To Glenderamakin's lofty springs;[1]
Must vanish, and his careless cheer
Be turned to heaviness and fear.
— Give Sir Lancelot Threlkeld praise!
Hear it, good man, old in days!
Thou tree of covert and of rest
For this young Bird that is distrest;
Among thy branches safe he lay,
And he was free to sport and play,
When falcons were abroad for prey.

A recreant harp, that sings of fear
And heaviness in Clifford's ear!

[1] Places near Keswick.

I said, when evil men are strong,
No life is good, no pleasure long,
A weak and cowardly untruth!
Our Clifford was a happy Youth,
And thankful through a weary time,
That brought him up to manhood's prime.
— Again he wanders forth at will,
And tends a flock from hill to hill:
His garb is humble; ne'er was seen
Such garb with such a noble mien;
Among the shepherd grooms no mate
Hath he, a Child of strength and state!
Yet lacks not friends for simple glee,
Nor yet for higher sympathy.
To his side the fallow-deer
Came, and rested without fear;
The eagle, lord of land and sea,
Stooped down to pay him fealty;
And both the undying fish [1] that swim
Through Bowscale-tarn did wait on him;
The pair were servants of his eye
In their immortality;
And glancing, gleaming, dark or bright,
Moved to and fro, for his delight.
He knew the rocks which Angels haunt
Upon the mountains visitant;

[1] It is imagined by the people of the country that there are two immortal Fish, inhabitants of this Tarn, which lies in the mountains not far from Threlkeld. — Blencathara, mentioned before, is the old and proper name of the mountain vulgarly called Saddleback. — (Wordsworth's Note.)

He hath kenned them taking wing:
And into caves where Faeries sing
He hath entered; and been told
By Voices how men lived of old.
Among the heavens his eye can see
The face of thing that is to be;
And, if that men report him right,
His tongue could whisper words of might.
— Now another day is come,
Fitter hope, and nobler doom;
He hath thrown aside his crook,
And hath buried deep his book;
Armour rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls; —
'Quell the Scot,' exclaims the Lance —
Bear me to the heart of France,
Is the longing of the shield —
Tell thy name, thou trembling Field;
Field of death, where'er thou be,
Groan thou with our victory!
Happy day, and mighty hour,
When our Shepherd, in his power,
Mailed and horsed, with lance and sword
To his ancestors restored
Like a re-appearing Star,
Like a glory from afar,
First shall head the flock of war!"

Alas! the impassioned minstrel did not know
How, by Heaven's grace, this Clifford's heart was framed,
How he, long forced in humble walks to go,
Was softened into feeling, soothed, and tamed.

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

In him the savage virtue of the Race,
Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were dead:
Nor did he change; but kept in lofty place
The wisdom which adversity had bred.

Glad were the vales, and every cottage hearth;
The Shepherd-lord was honoured more and more;
And, ages after he was laid in earth,
"The good Lord Clifford" was the name he bore.

ODE

[INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD]

I

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.

It is not now as it hath been of yore: —
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,

And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday; —
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

IV

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel — I feel it all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the Children are culling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm: —
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
— But there 's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

TILBERTHWAITE Glen.

"I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they."
— Ode: Intimations of Immortality, p. 241.

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a Mother's mind.
And no unworthy aim,
The homely Nurse doth all she can
To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly learned art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little Actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy Soul's immensity;
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,

That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind, —
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest —
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast: —

Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for these obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the Brooks which down their channels fret.
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;

The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;
The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

WORDSWORTH'S Home at Rydal Mount, 1813–1850.

"On this fair Mount, a Poet of your own,
One who ne'er ventured for a Delphic crown
To sue the God; but, haunting your green shade
All seasons through, is humbly pleased to braid
Ground-flowers, beneath your guardianship, self-sown."

Adieu, Rydalian Laurels, p. 253.

THE YEARS 1813 TO 1850

RYDAL MOUNT

INTRODUCTORY

THE Parsonage, situated as it is close by the churchyard, became intolerable to the Wordsworths as a residence after the loss of their children. They decided to move where the little graves would not be always in sight, but not out of the familiar neighborhood. Rydal Mount, just above the adjoining village of Rydal, was to be had, and improved financial conditions enabled them to take it and to live there for the remainder of the poet's life, — thirty-seven years. This place has been described and photographed so often that we seem to know it better thus than when we have clambered up the hillside to catch a glimpse over the barred gate, — for the place is occupied and not open to the public. However, one may pass beyond it and still take Wordsworth's favorite walk along the terrace of Nab Scar and recall, as he hoped posterity would recall, that

> *" on the mountain's side*
> *A* POET'S *hand first shaped it; and the steps*
> *Of that same bard — repeated to and fro*
> *At morn, at noon, and under moonlight skies*
> *Through the vicissitudes of many a year —*
> *Forbade the weeds to creep o'er its grey line."*

This pathway, between Upper Rydal and Grasmere, was the birthplace of many poems; and the view from it suggests many others, such as

> *"Wansfell! this Household has a favoured lot*
> *Living with liberty on thee to gaze."*

or

> *"Like a fair sister of the sky*
> *Unruffled doth the blue lake lie*
> *The mountains looking on."*

Below lies Rydal Water, on calm days so smooth a mirror that hills and islands are reflected with such clearness that one scarce can tell which are of the land and which of the water. Behind it rises Loughrigg Fell with its infinite variety of surface and shadow, while the lofty, rugged tree-spotted Nab Scar rises abruptly above the narrow walk.

Wordsworth used to say that there were three callings for which he was fitted by nature; — poet, landscape gardener, and critic of works of art. The gardens both at Dove Cottage and at Rydal Mount and the winter garden at Coleorton — after a lapse of one hundred years still one of the most beautiful gardens in the world — serve to prove his skill in displaying a wonderful variety of beauty within circumscribed limits.

And this mountain pathway traced by the poet's feet along the flank of Nab Scar shows that a keen feeling for landscape had been the guide. It is one of the finest view-points in the Lake Country.

During the first year of residence at Rydal Mount, "The Excursion" was completed and published. It had been in process of composition for nearly twenty years. More than any other of the poems, it gains by being read amid the scenes where it is laid. The Poet and the Wanderer start from the west bank of Grasmere Lake, proceed over Red Bank to Etterwater and thence into the two wonderful valleys of the Langdales, guarded by those "lusty twins" the Langdale Pikes. He who will may follow to-day in their footsteps, either on foot or by coach. The road passes close by that "one abode" where lived The Solitary, which does indeed

> *"Seem by Nature hollowed out to be*
> *The seat and bosom of pure innocence."*

Here, too, is that "liquid pool that glitters in the sun," Blea Tarn; here that

> *"House of stones collected on the spot,*
> *By rude hands built, with rocky knolls in front,"*

known as Hackett Cottage; and here, where "Nature hems you in with friendly arms," one cannot but recall the impassioned utterance of The Wanderer: —

> *"My lips, that may forget Thee in the crowd,*
> *Cannot forget Thee here, where Thou hast built*
> *For thy own glory in the wilderness!"*

Many blind and foolish things were said about "The Excursion," and the first edition, though only five hundred copies, was not exhausted for six years. One

contemporaneous comment, however, Hazlitt's, can scarcely be bettered; — "It resembles that part of the country in which the scene is laid. It has the same vastness and magnificence, with the same nakedness and confusion. It has the same overwhelming, oppressive power."

In the following year "The White Doe of Rylstone" was published, and in four years more "Peter Bell." This poem had been written twenty-one years before, while Wordsworth was living at Alfoxden. It met with a larger demand than any of his preceding poems, the edition of five hundred copies being exhausted in one month. Yet, even so, Wordsworth reported to a friend that the entire returns from his literary labors did not amount to £140.

Wordsworth's prose writings at this period were numerous and powerful. His "Two Addresses to the Freeholders of Westmoreland" and other pamphlets show how great was his interest in the pressing questions of the day, and with what clear and statesmanly vision he met them. His ideas on education, on social science, and on politics all bore the stamp of a "pure religion breathing household laws." He thought that the Whigs in passing over to Radicalism, had abandoned liberty for license. This led Shelley and some others to suppose that Wordsworth had forsaken the cause of the people, — a sad misconception, since no modern poet has defended the cause of real liberty more ardently.

"The Waggoner" came next in order of publication, owing to the urgency of Charles Lamb, who had read it in MS. *thirteen years before. When it appeared, dedicated to Charles Lamb, the latter wrote: "You cannot imagine how proud we are here of the dedication. We read it twice for once we do the poem; I mean all through. . . . It is as good as it was in 1806; and will be as good in 1829, if our dim eyes shall be awake to peruse it. Methinks there is a kind of shadowing affinity between the subject of the narrative and the subject of the dedication."*

At the age of sixty his physical powers were undiminished, and he is reported as "still the crack skater on Rydal Lake, and as to climbing of mountains, the hardiest and the youngest are yet hardly a match for him." But, as must inevitably happen at that time of life, he had the sadness of parting with many friends. Sir George Beaumont died in 1827, followed by Lady Beaumont two years later. In 1831, the beloved sister Dorothy sank into a state of mental and physical decline from which she never recovered, though lingering until after his own death. In the following year he wrote of Coleridge: "He and my beloved sister are the two beings to whom my intellect is most indebted, and they are now proceeding, as it were pari passu *along the path of sickness — I will not say towards the grave, but towards a blessed immortality."*

At last the hour of public appreciation arrived;

during the decade between 1835 and 1845 Wordsworth's poetical reputation was at its height. In 1839, he was called to Oxford to receive its degree D.C.L. His neighbors, Dr. and Mrs. Arnold of Fox How accompanied him, and Mrs. Arnold wrote thus of the ceremony: "The thundering applause from all quarters when the name of Wordsworth was heard and his venerable form was seen advancing in the procession, I cannot at all describe. It was really delightful to see such a tribute to such a man. It was the public voice for once harmoniously joining to pay homage to goodness and to talent, consistently employed in promoting the real happiness of his fellow-creatures. To us who know him so intimately, and the true humility and simplicity of his character, it was very affecting and delightful."

In 1842, the Government granted the poet a pension of £300 for life, and in 1843, on the death of Southey, named Wordsworth for the office of Poet-Laureate. Although touched by this mark of honor, he at first declined it, feeling that he was too old to undertake any work at stated periods for definite occasions. But on being assured that nothing should be required unless the spirit should move, he withdrew his objections.

In 1847, the Prince Consort being elected Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, Wordsworth (with the collaboration of his nephew Christopher) wrote the Installation Ode. It was set to music and performed on the great day, but such pleasure as this might have

given to the author was lost in the sorrow with which he lingered by the bedside of his dying daughter. Professor Sedgwick wrote to him that the performance of the Ode was followed by one of the most rapturous expressions of feeling he had ever had the happiness of witnessing.

But no public joy could avail as consolation for his private grief; in the shadow of it he dwelt for the remaining three years of his life, when he passed away at the age of eighty.

Any survey of the life of Wordsworth must have deep meaning for those whose eyes are fixed on the eternal places. Ridiculed often, overshadowed during long years by many of his contemporaries, he held his own way steadily and was an old man before he came into his own. But the laurels, though tardy, were final; henceforth none can wear England's highest poetic honor without feeling, as did Wordsworth's immediate successor, that it is indeed

> *"Laurel greener from the brows*
> *Of him that uttered nothing base."*

WANSFELL and Foot of Rydal Lake.

"Beautiful Son of Earth! . . . . .
. . . . . may these words attest
How oft, to elevate our spirits, shone
Thy visionary majesties of light,
How in thy pensive glooms our hearts found rest."

— Sonnet to Wansfell, p. 251.

TO MRS. MARSHALL FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

Rydal Mount, Thursday morning, 1813.

. . . Arrived yesterday. The weather is delightful, and the place a paradise; but my inner thoughts will go back to Grasmere. I was the last person who left the house yesterday evening. It seemed as quiet as the grave; and the very churchyard, where our dead lie, when I gave a last look upon it, seemed to cheer my thoughts. Then I could think of life and immortality. The house only reminded me of desolate gloom, emptiness, and cheerless silence. But why do I turn to these things? The morning is bright, and I am more cheerful.

. . . . . .

Dorothy Wordsworth.

"WANSFELL! THIS HOUSEHOLD HAS A FAVOURED LOT"

Wansfell! this Household has a favoured lot,
Living with liberty on thee to gaze,
To watch while Morn first crowns thee with her rays,
Or when along thy breast serenely float
Evening's angelic clouds. Yet ne'er a note
Hath sounded (shame upon the Bard!) thy praise
For all that thou, as if from heaven, hast brought
Of glory lavished on our quiet days.
Bountiful Son of Earth! when we are gone
From every object dear to mortal sight,

As soon we shall be, may these words attest
How oft, to elevate our spirits, shone
Thy visionary majesties of light,
How in thy pensive glooms our hearts found rest.

"THE MASSY WAYS, CARRIED ACROSS THESE HEIGHTS"[1]

The massy Ways, carried across these heights
By Roman perseverance, are destroyed,
Or hidden under ground, like sleeping worms.
How venture then to hope that Time will spare
This humble Walk? Yet on the mountain's side
A Poet's hand first shaped it; and the steps
Of that same Bard — repeated to and fro
At morn, at noon, and under moonlight skies
Through the vicissitudes of many a year —
Forbade the weeds to creep o'er its grey line.
No longer, scattering to the heedless winds
The vocal raptures of fresh poesy,
Shall he frequent these precincts; locked no more
In earnest converse with belovèd Friends,
Here will he gather stores of ready bliss,
As from the beds and borders of a garden
Choice flowers are gathered! But, if Power may spring
Out of a farewell yearning — favoured more

[1] The walk is what we call the *Far-terrace*, beyond the summer-house at Rydal Mount. The lines were written when we were afraid of being obliged to quit the place to which we were so much attached. (Wordsworth's Note.)

Than kindred wishes mated suitably
With vain regrets — the Exile would consign
This Walk, his loved possession, to the care
Of those pure Minds that reverence the Muse.

"ADIEU, RYDALIAN LAURELS!"[1]

Adieu, Rydalian Laurels! that have grown
And spread as if ye knew that days might come
When ye would shelter in a happy home,
On this fair Mount, a Poet of your own,
One who ne'er ventured for a Delphic crown
To sue the God; but, haunting your green shade
All seasons through, is humbly pleased to braid
Ground-flowers, beneath your guardianship, self-sown.
Farewell! no Minstrels now with harp new-strung
For summer wandering quit their household bowers;
Yet not for this wants Poesy a tongue
To cheer the Itinerant on whom she pours
Her spirit, while he crosses lonely moors,
Or musing sits forsaken halls among.

FROM "THE EXCURSION," BOOK I

[THE POET]

Oh! many are the Poets that are sown
By Nature; men endowed with highest gifts,
The vision and the faculty divine;
Yet wanting the accomplishment of verse,

[1] Composed during a tour in Summer of 1833.

(Which, in the docile season of their youth,
It was denied them to acquire, through lack
Of culture and inspiring aid of books,
Or haply by a temper too severe,
Or a nice backwardness afraid of shame)
Nor having e'er, as life advanced, been led
By circumstance to take unto the height
The measure of themselves, these favoured Beings,
All but a scattered few, live out their time,
Husbanding that which they possess within,
And go to the grave, unthought of. Strongest minds
Are often those of whom the noisy world
Hears least.

. . . . . .

Such was the Boy — but for the growing Youth
What soul was his, when, from the naked top
Of some bold headland, he beheld the sun
Rise up, and bathe the world in light! He looked —
Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
And ocean's liquid mass, in gladness lay
Beneath him: — Far and wide the clouds were touched,
And in their silent faces could he read
Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
The spectacle: sensation, soul, and form,
All melted into him; they swallowed up
His animal being; in them did he live,
And by them did he live; they were his life.
In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God,

Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
Rapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
That made him; it was blessedness and love!

A Herdsman on the lonely mountain tops,
Such intercourse was his, and in this sort
Was his existence oftentimes *possessed*.
O then how beautiful, how bright, appeared
The written promise! Early had he learned
To reverence the volume that displays
The mystery, the life which cannot die;
But in the mountains did he *feel* his faith.
All things, responsive to the writing, there
Breathed immortality, revolving life,
And greatness still revolving; infinite:
There littleness was not; the least of things
Seemed infinite; and there his spirit shaped
Her prospects, nor did he believe, — he *saw*.
What wonder if his being thus became
Sublime and comprehensive! Low desires,
Low thoughts had there no place; yet was his heart
Lowly; for he was meek in gratitude,
Oft as he called those ecstasies to mind,
And whence they flowed; and from them he acquired
Wisdom, which works through patience; thence he learned
In oft-recurring hours of sober thought
To look on Nature with a humble heart.

Self-questioned where it did not understand,
And with a superstitious eye of love.

FROM "THE EXCURSION," BOOK II

["THE SOLITARY'S" HOME AMONG THE MOUNTAINS]

"'T WAS not for love" —
Answered the sick man with a careless voice —
"That I came hither; neither have I found
Among associates who have power of speech,
Nor in such other converse as is here,
Temptation so prevailing as to change
That mood, or undermine my first resolve."
Then, speaking in like careless sort, he said
To my benign Companion, — "Pity 't is
That fortune did not guide you to this house
A few days earlier; then would you have seen
What stuff the Dwellers in a solitude,
That seems by Nature hollowed out to be
The seat and bosom of pure innocence,
Are made of; an ungracious matter this!
Which, for truth's sake, yet in remembrance too
Of past discussions with this zealous friend
And advocate of humble life, I now
Will force upon his notice; undeterred
By the example of his own pure course,
And that respect and deference which a soul
May fairly claim, by niggard age enriched
In what she most doth value, love of God
And his frail creature Man; — but ye shall hear.

BLEA Tarn Cottage. The home of "The Solitary" of "The Excursion."

"*A solitude*
That seems by Nature hollowed out to be
The seat and bosom of pure innocence."

— The Excursion, Book ii, p. 256.

I talk — and ye are standing in the sun
Without refreshment!"
Quickly had he spoken,
And, with light steps still quicker than his words,
Led toward the Cottage. Homely was the spot;
And, to my feeling, ere we reached the door,
Had almost a forbidding nakedness;
Less fair, I grant, even painfully less fair,
Than it appeared when from the beetling rock
We had looked down upon it. All within,
As left by the departed company,
Was silent; save the solitary clock
That on mine ear ticked with a mournful sound. —
Following our Guide we clomb the cottage-stairs
And reached a small apartment dark and low,
Which was no sooner entered than our Host
Said gaily, "This is my domain, my cell,
My hermitage, my cabin, what you will —
I love it better than a snail his house.
But now ye shall be feasted with our best."

[THE LANGDALE PIKES]

In genial mood,
While at our pastoral banquet thus we sate
Fronting the window of that little cell,
I could not, ever and anon, forbear
To glance an upward look on two huge Peaks
That from some other vale peered into this.
"Those lusty twins," exclaimed our host, "if here
It were your lot to dwell, would soon become

Your prized companions. — Many are the notes
Which, in his tuneful course, the wind draws forth
From rocks, woods, caverns, heaths, and dashing shores;
And well those lofty brethren bear their part
In the wild concert — chiefly when the storm
Rides high; then all the upper air they fill
With roaring sound, that ceases not to flow,
Like smoke, along the level of the blast,
In mighty current; theirs, too, is the song
Of stream and headlong flood that seldom fails;
And, in the grim and breathless hour of noon,
Methinks that I have heard them echo back
The thunder's greeting. Nor have nature's laws
Left them ungifted with a power to yield
Music of finer tone; a harmony,
So do I call it, though it be the hand
Of silence, though there be no voice; — the clouds,
The mist, the shadows, light of golden suns,
Motions of moonlight, all come thither — touch,
And have an answer — thither come, and shape
A language not unwelcome to sick hearts
And idle spirits: — there the sun himself,
At the calm close of summer's longest day,
Rests his substantial orb; between those heights
And on the top of either pinnacle,
More keenly than elsewhere in night's blue vault,
Sparkle the stars, as of their station proud.
Thoughts are not busier in the mind of man
Than the mute agents stirring there: — alone
Here do I sit and watch."

[MIST OPENING IN THE HILLS[1]]

A step,
A single step, that freed me from the skirts
Of the blind vapour, opened to my view
Glory beyond all glory ever seen
By waking sense or by the dreaming soul!
The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,
Was of a mighty city — boldly say
A wilderness of building, sinking far
And self-withdrawn into a boundless depth,
Far sinking into splendour — without end!
Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,
With alabaster domes, and silver spires,
And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
Uplifted; here, serene pavilions bright,
In avenues disposed; there, towers begirt
With battlements that on their restless fronts
Bore stars — illumination of all gems!
By earthly nature had the effect been wrought
Upon the dark materials of the storm
Now pacified; on them, and on the coves
And mountain-steeps and summits, whereunto
The vapours had receded, taking there
Their station under a cerulean sky.
Oh, 't was an unimaginable sight!

[1] This glorious appearance was described partly from what my friend Mr Luff witnessed, and partly from what Mrs Wordsworth and I had seen in company with Sir George and Lady Beaumont above Hartshope Hall on our way from Paterdale to Ambleside. (Wordsworth's Note.)

Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks and emerald turf,
Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky,
Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,
Molten together, and composing thus,
Each lost in each, that marvellous array
Of temple, palace, citadel, and huge
Fantastic pomp of structure without name,
In fleecy folds voluminous, enwrapped.
Right in the midst, where interspace appeared
Of open court, an object like a throne
Under a shining canopy of state
Stood fixed; and fixed resemblances were seen
To implements of ordinary use,
But vast in size, in substance glorified;
Such as by Hebrew Prophets were beheld
In vision — forms uncouth of mightiest power
For admiration and mysterious awe.
This little Vale, a dwelling-place of Man,
Lay low beneath my feet; 't was visible —
I saw not, but I felt that it was there.
That which I *saw* was the revealed abode
Of Spirits in beatitude.

FROM "THE EXCURSION," BOOK III

[THE VALE OF LITTLE LANGDALE]

A HUMMING BEE — a little tinkling rill —
A pair of falcons wheeling on the wing,
In clamorous agitation, round the crest
Of a tall rock, their airy citadel —

By each and all of these the pensive ear
Was greeted, in the silence that ensued,
When through the cottage-threshold we had passed,
And, deep within that lonesome valley, stood
Once more beneath the concave of a blue
And cloudless sky. — Anon exclaimed our Host —
Triumphantly dispersing with the taunt
The shade of discontent which on his brow
Had gathered, — " Ye have left my cell, — but see
How Nature hems you in with friendly arms!
And by her help ye are my prisoners still.
But which way shall I lead you? — how contrive,
In spot so parsimoniously endowed,
That the brief hours, which yet remain, may reap
Some recompense of knowledge or delight? "
So saying, round he looked, as if perplexed;
And, to remove those doubts, my grey-haired Friend
Said — " Shall we take this pathway for our guide? —
Upward it winds, as if, in summer heats,
Its line had first been fashioned by the flock
Seeking a place of refuge at the root
Of yon black Yew-tree, whose protruded boughs
Darken the silver bosom of the crag,
From which she draws her meagre sustenance.
There in commodious shelter may we rest.
Or let us trace this streamlet to its source;
Feebly it tinkles with an earthy sound,
And a few steps may bring us to the spot
Where, haply, crowned with flowerets and green herbs,
The mountain infant to the sun comes forth,

Like human life from darkness." — A quick turn
Through a strait passage of encumbered ground,
Proved that such hope was vain: — for now we stood
Shut out from prospect of the open vale,
And saw the water, that composed this rill,
Descending, disembodied, and diffused
O'er the smooth surface of an ample crag,
Lofty, and steep, and naked as a tower.
All further progress here was barred: — And who,
Thought I, if master of a vacant hour,
Here would not linger, willingly detained?
Whether to such wild objects he were led
When copious rains have magnified the stream
Into a loud and white-robed waterfall,
Or introduced at this more quiet time.

Upon a semicirque of turf-clad ground,
The hidden nook discovered to our view
A mass of rock, resembling, as it lay
Right at the foot of that moist precipice,
A stranded ship, with keel upturned, that rests
Fearless of winds and waves. Three several stones
Stood near, of smaller size, and not unlike
To monumental pillars: and, from these
Some little space disjoined a pair were seen,
That with united shoulders bore aloft
A fragment, like an altar, flat and smooth:
Barren the tablet, yet thereon appeared
A tall and shining holly, that had found
A hospitable chink, and stood upright,

THE Langdale Pikes.

"Many are the notes
Which, in his tuneful course, the wind draws forth
From rocks, woods, caverns, heaths, and dashing shores;
And well those lofty brethren bear their part
In the wild concert."

As if inserted by some human hand
In mockery, to wither in the sun,
Or lay its beauty flat before a breeze,
The first that entered.[1] But no breeze did now
Find entrance; — high or low appeared no trace
Of motion, save the water that descended,
Diffused adown that barrier of steep rock,
And softly creeping, like a breath of air,
Such as is sometimes seen, and hardly seen,
To brush the still breast of a crystal lake.

"Behold a cabinet for sages built,
Which kings might envy!" — Praise to this effect
Broke from the happy old Man's reverend lip;
Who to the Solitary turned, and said,
"In sooth, with love's familiar privilege,
You have decried the wealth which is your own.
Among these rocks and stones, methinks, I see
More than the heedless impress that belongs
To lonely nature's casual work: they bear
A semblance strange of power intelligent,
And of design not wholly worn away.
Boldest of plants that ever faced the wind,
How gracefully that slender shrub looks forth
From its fantastic birth-place! And I own,
Some shadowy intimations haunt me here,
That in these shows a chronicle survives
Of purposes akin to those of Man,
But wrought with mightier arm than now prevails.

[1] A little exploration about Blea Tarn to-day will reveal all these details.

— Voiceless the stream descends into the gulf
With timid lapse; — and lo! while in this strait
I stand — the chasm of sky above my head
Is heaven's profoundest azure; no domain
For fickle, short-lived clouds to occupy,
Or to pass through; but rather an abyss
In which the everlasting stars abide;
And whose soft gloom, and boundless depth, might tempt
The curious eye to look for them by day.
— Hail Contemplation! from the stately towers,
Reared by the industrious hand of human art
To lift thee high above the misty air
And turbulence of murmuring cities vast:
From academic groves, that have for thee
Been planted, hither come and find a lodge
To which thou mayst resort for holier peace, —
From whose calm centre thou, through height or depth,
Mayst penetrate, wherever truth shall lead;
Measuring through all degrees, until the scale
Of time and conscious nature disappear,
Lost in unsearchable eternity!"

FROM "THE EXCURSION," BOOK IV

[MAN'S RELATION TO GOD]

. . . With voice
That did not falter though the heart was moved,
The Wanderer said: —
"One adequate support
For the calamities of mortal life

Exists — one only; an assured belief
That the procession of our fate, howe'er
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power;
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good.
— The darts of anguish *fix* not where the seat
Of suffering hath been thoroughly fortified
By acquiescence in the Will supreme
For time and for eternity; by faith,
Faith absolute in God, including hope,
And the defence that lies in boundless love
Of his perfections; with habitual dread
Of aught unworthily conceived, endured
Impatiently, ill-done, or left undone,
To the dishonour of his holy name.
Soul of our Souls, and safeguard of the world!
Sustain, thou only canst, the sick of heart;
Restore their languid spirits, and recall
Their lost affections unto thee and thine!"

Then, as we issued from that covert nook,
He thus continued, lifting up his eyes
To heaven: — "How beautiful this dome of sky;
And the vast hills, in fluctuation fixed
At thy command, how awful! Shall the Soul,
Human and rational, report of thee
Even less than these? — Be mute who will, who can,
Yet I will praise thee with impassioned voice:
My lips, that may forget thee in the crowd,

Cannot forget thee here; where thou hast built,
For thy own glory, in the wilderness!
Me didst thou constitute a priest of thine,
In such a temple as we now behold
Reared for thy presence: therefore, am I bound
To worship, here, and everywhere — as one
Not doomed to ignorance, though forced to tread,
From childhood up, the ways of poverty;
From unreflecting ignorance preserved,
And from debasement rescued. — By thy grace
The particle divine remained unquenched;
And, 'mid the wild weeds of a rugged soil,
Thy bounty caused to flourish deathless flowers,
From paradise transplanted: wintry age
Impends; the frost will gather round my heart;
If the flowers wither, I am worse than dead!
— Come, labour, when the worn-out frame requires
Perpetual sabbath; come, disease and want;
And sad exclusion through decay of sense;
But leave me unabated trust in thee —
And let thy favour, to the end of life,
Inspire me with ability to seek
Repose and hope among eternal things —
Father of heaven and earth! and I am rich,
And will possess my portion in content!

[EVOLUTION LEADS TO LOVE AND ADORATION]

Happy is he who lives to understand,
Not human nature only, but explores
All natures, — to the end that he may find

The law that governs each; and where begins
The union, the partition where, that makes
Kind and degree, among all visible Beings;
The constitutions, powers, and faculties,
Which they inherit, — cannot step beyond, —
And cannot fall beneath; that do assign
To every class its station and its office,
Through all the mighty commonwealth of things
Up from the creeping plant to sovereign Man.
Such converse, if directed by a meek,
Sincere, and humble spirit, teaches love:
For knowledge is delight; and such delight
Breeds love: yet, suited as it rather is
To thought and to the climbing intellect,
It teaches less to love, than to adore;
If that be not indeed the highest love!

. . . . . .

And further; by contemplating these Forms
In the relations which they bear to man,
He shall discern, how, through the various means
Which silently they yield, are multiplied
The spiritual presences of absent things.
Trust me, that for the instructed, time will come
When they shall meet no object but may teach
Some acceptable lesson to their minds
Of human suffering, or of human joy.
So shall they learn, while all things speak of man,
Their duties from all forms; and general laws,
And local accidents, shall tend alike
To rouse, to urge; and, with the will, confer

The ability to spread the blessings wide
Of true philanthropy. The light of love
Not failing, perseverance from their steps
Departing not, for them shall be confirmed
The glorious habit by which sense is made
Subservient still to moral purposes,
Auxiliar to divine. That change shall clothe
The naked spirit, ceasing to deplore
The burthen of existence. Science then
Shall be a precious visitant; and then,
And only then, be worthy of her name:
For then her heart shall kindle; her dull eye,
Dull and inanimate, no more shall hang
Chained to its object in brute slavery;
But taught with patient interest to watch
The processes of things, and serve the cause
Of order and distinctness, not for this
Shall it forget that its most noble use,
Its most illustrious province, must be found
In furnishing clear guidance, a support
Not treacherous, to the mind's *excursive* power.
— So build we up the Being that we are;
Thus deeply drinking-in the soul of things
We shall be wise perforce; and, while inspired
By choice, and conscious that the Will is free,
Shall move unswerving, even as if impelled
By strict necessity, along the path
Of order and of good. Whate'er we see,
Or feel, shall tend to quicken and refine;
Shall fix, in calmer seats of moral strength,

BLEA Tarn, Langdale, Scene of Book III of "The Excursion."

"Ye have left my cell, — but see
How Nature hems you in with friendly arms!
And by her help ye are my prisoners still."

— The Excursion, Book iii, p 261.

Earthly desires; and raise, to loftier heights
Of divine love, our intellectual soul.

FROM "THE EXCURSION," BOOK V

[THE VALE OF GRASMERE]

— So we descend: and winding round a rock
Attain a point that showed the valley — stretched
In length before us; and, not distant far,
Upon a rising ground a grey church-tower,
Whose battlements were screened by tufted trees.
And towards a crystal Mere, that lay beyond
Among steep hills and woods embosomed, flowed
A copious stream with boldly winding course;
Here traceable, there hidden — there again
To sight restored, and glittering in the sun.
On the stream's bank, and everywhere, appeared
Fair dwellings, single, or in social knots;
Some scattered o'er the level, others perched
On the hill sides, a cheerful quiet scene,
Now in its morning purity arrayed.

. . . . . .

Oft pausing, we pursued our way;
Nor reached the village-churchyard till the sun
Travelling at steadier pace than ours, had risen
Above the summits of the highest hills,
And round our path darted oppressive beams.

As chanced, the portals of the sacred Pile
Stood open; and we entered. On my frame,
At such transition from the fervid air,

A grateful coolness fell, that seemed to strike
The heart, in concert with that temperate awe
And natural reverence which the place inspired.
Not raised in nice proportions was the pile,
But large and massy; for duration built;
With pillars crowded, and the roof upheld
By naked rafters intricately crossed,
Like leafless underboughs, in some thick wood,
All withered by the depth of shade above.
Admonitory texts inscribed the walls,
Each, in its ornamental scroll, enclosed;
Each also crowned with wingèd heads — a pair
Of rudely painted Cherubim. The floor
Of nave and aisle, in unpretending guise,
Was occupied by oaken benches ranged
In seemly rows; the chancel only showed
Some vain distinctions, marks of earthly state
By immemorial privilege allowed;
Though with the Encincture's special sanctity
But ill according. An heraldic shield,
Varying its tincture with the changeful light,
Imbued the altar-window; fixed aloft
A faded hatchment hung, and one by time
Yet undiscoloured. A capacious pew
Of sculptured oak stood here, with drapery lined;
And marble monuments were here displayed
Thronging the walls; and on the floor beneath
Sepulchral stones appeared, with emblems graven
And foot-worn epitaphs, and some with small
And shining effigies of brass inlaid.

[HACKETT COTTAGE IN LITTLE LANGDALE]

You behold,
High on the breast of yon dark mountain, dark
With stony barrenness, a shining speck
Bright as a sunbeam sleeping till a shower
Brush it away, or cloud pass over it;
And such it might be deemed — a sleeping sunbeam;
But 't is a plot of cultivated ground,
Cut off, an island in the dusky waste;
And that attractive brightness is its own.
The lofty site, by nature framed to tempt
Amid a wilderness of rocks and stones
The tiller's hand, a hermit might have chosen,
For opportunity presented, thence
Far forth to send his wandering eye o'er land
And ocean, and look down upon the works,
The habitations, and the ways of men,
Himself unseen! But no tradition tells
That ever hermit dipped his maple dish
In the sweet spring that lurks 'mid yon green fields;
And no such visionary views belong
To those who occupy and till the ground,
High on that mountain where they long have dwelt
A wedded pair in childless solitude.
A house of stones collected on the spot,
By rude hands built, with rocky knolls in front,
Backed also by a ledge of rock, whose crest
Of birch-trees waves over the chimney top;
A rough abode — in colour, shape, and size,

Such as in unsafe times of border-war
Might have been wished for and contrived, to elude
The eye of roving plunderer — for their need
Suffices; and unshaken bears the assault
Of their most dreaded foe, the strong Southwest
In anger blowing from the distant sea.
— Alone within her solitary hut;
There, or within the compass of her fields,
At any moment may the Dame be found,
True as the stock-dove to her shallow nest
And to the grove that holds it. She beguiles
By intermingled work of house and field
The summer's day, and winter's; with success
Not equal, but sufficient to maintain,
Even at the worst, a smooth stream of content,
Until the expected hour at which her Mate
From the far-distant quarry's vault returns;
And by his converse crowns a silent day
With evening cheerfulness. In powers of mind,
In scale of culture, few among my flock
Hold lower rank than this sequestered pair:
But true humility descends from heaven;
And that best gift of heaven hath fallen on them;
Abundant recompense for every want.
Stoop from your height, ye proud, and copy these!
Who, in their noiseless dwelling-place, can hear
The voice of wisdom whispering Scripture texts
For the mind's government, or tempter's peace;
And recommending for their mutual need,
Forgiveness, patience, hope, and charity!

[LIFE IS LOVE AND IMMORTALITY]

Life is love and immortality,
The being one, and one the element.
There lies the channel and original bed,
From the beginning, hollowed out and scooped
For Man's affections — else betrayed and lost,
And swallowed up 'mid deserts infinite!
This is the genuine course, the aim, and end
Of prescient reason; all conclusions else
Are abject, vain, presumptuous, and perverse.
The faith partaking of those holy times,
Life, I repeat, is energy of love
Divine or human; exercised in pain,
In strife, and tribulation; and ordained,
If so approved and sanctified, to pass,
Through shades and silent rest, to endless joy!

FROM "THE EXCURSION," BOOK VII

[GRASMERE CHURCHYARD]

"THESE grassy heaps lie amicably close,"
Said I, "like surges heaving in the wind
Along the surface of a mountain pool:
Whence comes it, then, that yonder we behold
Five graves, and only five, that rise together
Unsociably sequestered, and encroaching
On the smooth playground of the village-school?"

The Vicar answered, — "No disdainful pride
In them who rest beneath, nor any course
Of strange or tragic accident, hath helped
To place those hillocks in that lonely guise.
— Once more look forth, and follow with your sight
The length of road that from yon mountain's base
Through bare enclosures stretches, till its line
Is lost within a little tuft of trees;
Then, reappearing in a moment, quits
The cultured fields; and up the heathy waste,
Mounts, as you see, in mazes serpentine,
Led towards an easy outlet of the vale,
That little shady spot, that sylvan tuft,
By which the road is hidden, also hides
A cottage from our view; though I discern
(Ye scarcely can) amid its sheltering trees
The smokeless chimney-top. —
All unembowered
And naked stood that lowly Parsonage
(For such in truth it is, and appertains
To a small Chapel in the vale beyond)
When hither came its last Inhabitant.
Rough and forbidding were the choicest roads
By which our northern wilds could then be crossed;
And into most of these secluded vales
Was no access for wain, heavy or light.
So, at his dwelling-place the Priest arrived
With store of household goods, in panniers slung
On sturdy horses graced with jingling bells,
And on the back of more ignoble beast;

HACKETT Cottage.

"A house of stones collected on the spot,
By rude hands built, with rocky knolls in front,
Backed also by a ledge of rock, whose crest
Of birch-trees waves over the chimney top."

— The Excursion, Book v, p 271.

That, with like burthen of effects most prized
Or easiest carried, closed the motley train."

[THE SIMPLE LIFE]

So, each loftier aim
Abandoning and all his showy friends,
For a life's stay (slender it was, but sure)
He turned to this secluded chapelry;
That had been offered to his doubtful choice
By an unthought-of patron. Bleak and bare
They found the cottage, their allotted home;
Naked without, and rude within; a spot
With which the Cure not long had been endowed:
And far remote the chapel stood, — remote,
And, from his Dwelling, unapproachable,
Save through a gap high in the hills, an opening
Shadeless and shelterless, by driving showers
Frequented, and beset with howling winds.
Yet cause was none, whate'er regret might hang
On his own mind, to quarrel with the choice
Or the necessity that fixed him here;
Apart from old temptations, and constrained
To punctual labour in his sacred charge.
See him a constant preacher to the poor!
And visiting, though not with saintly zeal,
Yet, when need was, with no reluctant will,
The sick in body, or distrest in mind;
And, by a salutary change, compelled
To rise from timely sleep, and meet the day

With no engagement, in his thoughts, more proud
Or splendid than his garden could afford,
His fields, or mountains by the heath-cock ranged
Or the wild brooks; from which he now returned
Contented to partake the quiet meal
Of his own board, where sat his gentle Mate
And three fair Children, plentifully fed
Though simply, from their little household farm;
Nor wanted timely treat of fish or fowl
By nature yielded to his practised hand; —
To help the small but certain comings-in
Of that spare benefice. Yet not the less
Theirs was a hospitable board, and theirs
A charitable door.
So days and years
Passed on; — the inside of that rugged house
Was trimmed and brightened by the Matron's care,
And gradually enriched with things of price,
Which might be lacked for use or ornament.
What, though no soft and costly sofa there
Insidiously stretched out its lazy length,
And no vain mirror glittered upon the walls,
Yet were the windows of the low abode
By shutters weather-fended, which at once
Repelled the storm and deadened its loud roar.
There snow-white curtains hung in decent folds;
Tough moss, and long-enduring mountain plants,
That creep along the ground with sinuous trail,
Were nicely braided; and composed a work
Like Indian mats, that with appropriate grace

Lay at the threshold and the inner doors;
And a fair carpet, woven of homespun wool
But tinctured daintily with florid hues,
For seemliness and warmth, on festal days,
Covered the smooth blue slabs of mountain-stone
With which the parlour-floor, in simplest guise
Of pastoral homesteads, had been long inlaid.

[LONELINESS OF THE DEAF MAN]

Almost at the root
Of that tall pine, the shadow of whose bare
And slender stem, while here I sit at eve,
Oft stretches towards me, like a long straight path
Traced faintly in the greensward; there, beneath
A plain blue stone, a gentle Dalesman lies,
From whom, in early childhood, was withdrawn
The precious gift of hearing. He grew up
From year to year in loneliness of soul;
And this deep mountain-valley was to him
Soundless, with all its streams. The bird of dawn
Did never rouse this Cottager from sleep
With startling summons; not for his delight
The vernal cuckoo shouted; not for him
Murmured the labouring bee. When stormy winds
Were working the broad bosom of the lake
Into a thousand thousand sparkling waves,
Rocking the trees, or driving cloud on cloud
Along the sharp edge of yon lofty crags,
The agitated scene before his eye

Was silent as a picture: evermore
Were all things silent, wheresoe'er he moved.
Yet, by the solace of his own pure thoughts
Upheld, he duteously pursued the round
Of rural labours; the steep mountain-side
Ascended, with his staff and faithful dog;
The plough he guided, and the scythe he swayed;
And the ripe corn before his sickle fell
Among the jocund reapers. For himself,
All watchful and industrious as he was,
He wrought not: neither field nor flock he owned:
No wish for wealth had place within his mind;
Nor husband's love, nor father's hope or care.

[BLINDNESS]

Soul-cheering Light, most bountiful of things!
Guide of our way, mysterious comforter!
Whose sacred influence, spread through earth and heaven,
We all too thanklessly participate,
Thy gifts were utterly withheld from him
Whose place of rest is near yon ivied porch,
Yet, of the wild brooks ask if he complained;
Ask of the channelled rivers if they held
A safer, easier, more determined course.
What terror doth it strike into the mind
To think of one, blind and alone, advancing
Straight toward some precipice's airy brink!
But, timely warned, *He* would have stayed his steps,
Protected, say enlightened, by his ear;

And on the very edge of vacancy
Not more endangered than a man whose eye
Beholds the gulf beneath. — No floweret blooms
Throughout the lofty range of these rough hills,
Nor in the woods, that could from him conceal
Its birth-place; none whose figure did not live
Upon his touch. The bowels of the earth
Enriched with knowledge his industrious mind;
The ocean paid him tribute from the stores
Lodged in her bosom; and, by science led,
His genius mounted to the plains of heaven.
— Methinks I see him — how his eyeballs rolled,
Beneath his ample brow, in darkness paired, —
But each instinct with spirit; and the frame
Of the whole countenance alive with thought,
Fancy, and understanding; while the voice
Discoursed of natural or of moral truth
With eloquence, and such authentic power,
That, in his presence, humbler knowledge stood
Abashed, and tender pity overawed.

"A noble — and, to unreflecting minds,
A marvellous spectacle," the Wanderer said,
"Beings like these present! But proof abounds
Upon the earth that faculties, which seem
Extinguished, do not, *therefore*, cease to be.
And to the mind among her powers of sense
This transfer is permitted, — not alone
That the bereft their recompense may win;
But for remoter purposes of love

And charity; nor last nor least for this,
That to the imagination may be given
A type and shadow of an awful truth;
How, likewise, under sufferance divine,
Darkness is banished from the realms of death,
By man's imperishable spirit quelled.
Unto the men who see not as we see
Futurity was thought, in ancient times,
To be laid open, and they prophesied.
And know we not that from the blind have flowed
The highest, holiest, raptures of the lyre;
And wisdom married to immortal verse?"

FROM "THE EXCURSION," BOOK IX

[TRUE EQUALITY OF MANKIND]

Alas! what differs more than man from man!
And whence that difference? whence but from himself
For see the universal Race endowed
With the same upright form! — The sun is fixed,
And the infinite magnificence of heaven
Fixed, within reach of every human eye:
The sleepless ocean murmurs for all ears;
The vernal field infuses fresh delight
Into all hearts. Throughout the world of sense,
Even as an object is sublime or fair,
That object is laid open to the view
Without reserve or veil; and as a power
Is salutary, or an influence sweet,

LOUGHRIGG Tarn and Fell. Scene of Book IX of "The Excursion."

"From the grassy mountain's open side
We gazed, in silence hushed, with eyes intent
On the refulgent spectacle, diffused
Through earth, sky, water, and all visible space."

— **The Excursion, Book ix, p. 285.**

Are each and all enabled to perceive
That power, that influence, by impartial law.
Gifts nobler are vouchsafed alike to all;
Reason, and, with that reason, smiles and tears;
Imagination, freedom in the will:
Conscience to guide and check; and death to be
Foretasted, immortality conceived
By all, — a blissful immortality,
To them whose holiness on earth shall make
The Spirit capable of heaven, assured.
Strange, then, nor less than monstrous, might be deemed
The failure, if the Almighty, to this point
Liberal and undistinguishing, should hide
The excellence of moral qualities
From common understanding; leaving truth
And virtue, difficult, abstruse, and dark;
Hard to be won, and only by a few;
Strange, should He deal herein with nice respects,
And frustrate all the rest! Believe it not:
The primal duties shine aloft — like stars;
The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of Man — like flowers.
The generous inclination, the just rule,
Kind wishes, and good actions, and pure thoughts —
No mystery is here! Here is no boon
For high — yet not for low; for proudly graced —
Yet not for meek of heart. The smoke ascends
To heaven as lightly from the cottage hearth
As from the haughtiest palace. He, whose soul
Ponders this true equality, may walk

The fields of earth with gratitude and hope;
Yet, in that meditation, will he find
Motive to sadder grief, as we have found;
Lamenting ancient virtues overthrown,
And for the injustice grieving, that hath made
So wide a difference between man and man.

[DUTY OF THE STATE IN EDUCATION]

O for the coming of that glorious time
When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth
And best protection, this imperial Realm,
While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
An obligation, on her part, to *teach*
Them who are born to serve her and obey;
Binding herself by statute to secure
For all the children whom her soil maintains
The rudiments of letters, and inform
The mind with moral and religious truth,
Both understood and practised, — so that none,
However destitute, be left to droop
By timely culture unsustained; or run
Into a wild disorder; or be forced
To drudge through a weary life without the help
Of intellectual implements and tools;
A savage horde among the civilised,
A servile band among the lordly free!
This sacred right the lisping babe proclaims
To be inherent in him, by Heaven's will,
For the protection of his innocence;

And the rude boy — who, having overpassed
The sinless age, by conscience is enrolled,
Yet mutinously knits his angry brow,
And lifts his wilful hand on mischief bent,
Or turns the godlike faculty of speech
To impious use — by process indirect
Declares his due, while he makes known his need.
—This sacred right is fruitlessly announced,
This universal plea in vain addressed,
To eyes and ears of parents who themselves
Did, in the time of their necessity,
Urge it in vain; and, therefore, like a prayer
That from the humblest floor ascends to heaven,
It mounts to meet the State's parental ear;
Who, if indeed she own a mother's heart,
And be not most unfeelingly devoid
Of gratitude to Providence, will grant
The unquestionable good.

[ON LAKE WINDERMERE]

With caution we embarked; and now the pair
For prouder service were addrest; but each,
Wishful to leave an opening for my choice,
Dropped the light oar his eager hand had seized.
Thanks given for that becoming courtesy,
Their place I took — and for a grateful office
Pregnant with recollections of the time
When, on thy bosom, spacious Windermere!
A Youth, I practised this delightful art;

Tossed on the waves alone, or 'mid a crew
Of joyous comrades. Soon as the reedy marge
Was cleared, I dipped, with arms accordant, oars
Free from obstruction; and the boat advanced
Through crystal water, smoothly as a hawk,
That, disentangled from the shady boughs
Of some thick wood, her place of covert, cleaves
With correspondent wings the abyss of air.
— "Observe," the Vicar said, "yon rocky isle
With birch-trees fringed; my hand shall guide the helm,
While thitherward we shape our course; or while
We seek that other, on the western shore;
Where the bare columns of those lofty firs,
Supporting gracefully a massy dome
Of sombre foliage, seem to imitate
A Grecian temple rising from the Deep."

"Turn where we may," said I, "we cannot err
In this delicious region." — Cultured slopes,
Wild tracts of forest ground, and scattered groves,
And mountains bare, or clothed with ancient woods,
Surrounded us; and, as we held our way
Along the level of the glassy flood,
They ceased not to surround us; change of place
From kindred features diversely combined,
Producing change of beauty ever new.
— Ah! that such beauty, varying in the light
Of living nature, cannot be portrayed
By words, nor by the pencil's silent skill;
But is the property of him alone

Who hath beheld it, noted it with care,
And in his mind recorded it with love!
. . . . . .
. . . Right across the lake
Our pinnace moves, then, coasting creek and bay,
Glades we behold, and into thickets peep,
Where couch the spotted deer; or raised our eyes
To shaggy steeps on which the careless goat
Browsed by the side of dashing waterfalls;
And thus the bark, meandering with the shore,
Pursued her voyage, till a natural pier
Of jutting rock invited us to land.

[A VESPER SERVICE ON LOUGHRIGG FELL]

Alert to follow as the Pastor led,
We clomb a green hill's side; and, as we clomb,
The Valley, opening out her bosom, gave
Fair prospect, intercepted less and less,
O'er the flat meadows and indented coast
Of the smooth lake, in compass seen: — far off,
And yet conspicuous, stood the old Church-tower,
In majesty presiding over fields
And habitations seemingly preserved
From all intrusion of the restless world
By rocks impassable and mountains huge.
. . . . . .
While from the grassy mountain's open side
We gazed, in silence hushed, with eyes intent

On the refulgent spectacle, diffused
Through earth, sky, water, and all visible space.
. . . . . .
On us the venerable Pastor turned
His beaming eye that had been raised to Heaven,
" Once, while the Name, Jehovah, was a sound
Within the circuit of this sea-girt isle
Unheard, the savage nations bowed the head
To Gods delighting in remorseless deeds;
Gods which themselves had fashioned, to promote
Ill purposes, and flatter foul desires.
Then, in the bosom of yon mountain-cove,
To those inventions of corrupted man
Mysterious rites were solemnised; and there —
Amid impending rocks and gloomy woods —
Of those terrific Idols some received
Such dismal service, that the loudest voice
Of the swoln cataracts (which now are heard
Soft murmuring) was too weak to overcome,
Though aided by wild winds, the groans and shrieks
Of human victims, offered up to appease
Or to propitiate. And, if living eyes
Had visionary faculties to see
The thing that hath been as the thing that is,
Aghast we might behold this crystal Mere
Bedimmed with smoke, in wreaths voluminous
Flung from the body of devouring fires,
To Taranis erected on the heights
By priestly hands, for sacrifice performed
Exultingly, in view of open day

EXTERIOR of St. Oswald's Church, Grasmere.

"— So we descend: and winding round a rock
Attain a point that showed the valley — stretched
In length before us; and, not distant far,
Upon a rising ground a grey church-tower,
Whose battlements were screened by tufted trees."

— The Excursion, Book v. p. 269.

And full assemblage of a barbarous host;
Or to Andates, female Power! who gave
(For so they fancied) glorious victory.
— A few rude monuments of mountain-stone
Survive; all else is swept away. — How bright
The appearances of things! From such, how changed
The existing worship; and with those compared,
The worshippers how innocent and blest!
So wide the difference, a willing mind
Might almost think, at this affecting hour,
That paradise, the lost abode of man,
Was raised again: and to a happy few,
In its original beauty, here restored.

"Whence but from thee, the true and only God,
And from the faith derived through Him who bled
Upon the cross, this marvellous advance
Of good from evil; as if one extreme
Were left, the other gained. — O ye, who come
To kneel devoutly in yon reverend Pile,
Called to such office by the peaceful sound
Of sabbath bells; and ye, who sleep in earth,
All cares forgotten, round its hallowed walls!
For you, in presence of this little band
Gathered together on the green hill-side,
Your Pastor is emboldened to prefer
Vocal thanksgivings to the eternal King;
Whose love, whose counsel, whose commands, have made
Your very poorest rich in peace of thought
And in good works; and him, who is endowed

With scantiest knowledge, master of all truth
Which the salvation of his soul requires.
Conscious of that abundant favour showered
On you, the children of my humble care,
And this dear land, our country, while on earth
We sojourn, have I lifted up my soul,
Joy giving voice to fervent gratitude.
These barren rocks, your stern inheritance;
These fertile fields, that recompense your pains;
The shadowy vale, the sunny mountain-top;
Woods waving in the wind their lofty heads,
Or hushed; the roaring waters and the still —
They see the offering of my lifted hands,
They hear my lips present their sacrifice,
They know, if I be silent, morn or even:
For, though in whispers speaking, the full heart
Will find a vent; and thought is praise to him,
Audible praise, to thee, omniscient Mind,
From whom all gifts descend, all blessings flow!"

TO B. R. HAYDON

Rydal Mount, 7th April, 1817.

. . . . . .

The miscreant,[1] Hazlitt, continues, I have heard, his abuse of Southey, Coleridge and myself in the *Examiner*, I hope that you do not associate with the fellow; he is not

[1] From some of Wordsworth's anecdotes, recorded in Haydon's Journal, it appears that Hazlitt had scandalized the neighborhood at Ambleside by his nocturnal rambles and their consequences, to Wordsworth's great disgust. Hazlitt had praised "The Excursion" and resented the fact that Wordsworth took no notice of it.

a proper person to be admitted into respectable society, being the most perverse and malevolent creature that ill-luck has ever thrown in my way. Avoid him, he is a ——, and this I understand is the general opinion where he is known in London.

. . . . . .

Perhaps some of Southey's friends may think that his tranquillity is disturbed by the late and present attacks upon him — not a jot. Bating inward sorrow for the loss of his only son, he is cheerful as a lark and happy as the day. Prosperous in his literary undertakings, admired by his friends, in good health, and honoured by a large portion of the public, busily employed from morning to night, and capable, from his talents, of punishing those who act unjustly towards him, what cause has he to be disturbed? I left him the other day preparing a rod for Mr Wm. Smith. Pray let me hear from you, and believe me, my dear Sir, with great regard and high respect,

Most truly yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

TO B. R. HAYDON

Rydal Mount, 16th January, 1820.

. . . . . .

Now that you have recovered your eyes, paint, and leave writing to the dunces and malignants with which London swarms. You have taken too much trouble about them. How is Keats? he is a youth of promise, too great for the sorry company he keeps. Do you skate? We

have charming diversion in that way about our lakes. I wish you were here to partake of it. The splendour of the snow-clad mountains, by moonlight in particular, is most charming, and the softness of the shadows surpasses anything you can imagine; this when the moon is at a particular point of elevation. I never saw anything so exquisite, though I believe Titian has, and so, therefore, perhaps may you.

TO JAMES LOSH

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 4, 1821.

. . . I should think that I had lived to little purpose if my notions on the subject of government had undergone no modification. My youth must, in that case, have been without enthusiasm, and my manhood endued with small capability of profiting by reflection. If I were addressing those who have dealt so liberally with the words renegade, apostate, etc., I should retort the charge upon them, and say, *you* have been deluded by *places* and *persons*, while I have stuck to *principles*. *I* abandoned France, and her rulers, when *they* abandoned the struggle for liberty, gave themselves up to tyranny, and endeavoured to enslave the world. I disapproved of the war against France at its commencement, thinking — which was perhaps an error — that it might have been avoided; but after Buonaparte had violated the independence of Switzerland, my heart turned against him, and against the nation that could submit to be the instrument of such an outrage. Here it was that I parted, in feeling, from the Whigs, and to a certain degree

united with their adversaries, who were free from the delusion (such as I must ever regard it) of Mr Fox and his party that a safe and honourable peace was practicable with the French nation, and that an ambitious conqueror like Buonaparte could be softened down into a commercial rival.

TO WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

Rydal Mount, near Ambleside, September 3d, 1821.

. . . I feel myself much honoured by the present of your book of Latin poems, and it arrived at a time when I had the use of my eyes for reading, and with great pleasure did I employ them in the perusal of the dissertation annexed to your poems, which I read several times; but the poems themselves I have not been able to look into, for I was seized with a fit of composition at that time, and deferred the pleasure to which your poems invited me till I could give them an undivided attention. . . . We live here somewhat singularly circumstanced — in solitude during nearly nine months of the year, and for the rest in a round of engagements. I have nobody near me who reads Latin, so that I can only speak of your essay from recollection. You will not perhaps be surprised when I state that I differ from you in opinion as to the propriety of the Latin language being employed by moderns for works of taste and imagination. Miserable would have been the lot of Dante, Ariosto, and Petrarch if they had preferred the Latin to their mother tongue (there is, by-the-by, a Latin translation of Dante which you do not seem to know), and what could Milton, who was surely no

mean master of the Latin tongue, have made of his *Paradise Lost,* had that vehicle been employed instead of the language of the Thames and Severn! Should we even admit that all modern dialects are comparatively changeable, and therefore limited in their efficacy, may not the sentiment which Milton so pleasingly expresses, when he says he is content to be read in his native isle only, be extended to durability; and is it not more desirable to be read with affection and pride, and familiarly for five hundred years, by all orders of minds, and all ranks of people, in your native tongue, than only by a few scattered scholars for the space of three thousand? Had your idylliums been in English, I should long ere this have been as well acquainted with them as with your *Gebir,* and with your other poems.

I met with a hundred things in your "Dissertation" that fell in with my own judgments, but there are many opinions which I should like to talk over with you. Several of the separate remarks, upon Virgil in particular, though perfectly just, would perhaps have been better placed in notes or an appendix; they are details that obstruct the view of the whole. Are you not also penurious in your praise of Gray? The fragment at the commencement of his fourth book, in which he laments the death of West, in cadence and sentiment, touches me in a manner for which I am grateful. The first book also of the same poems appears to me as well executed as anything of that kind is likely to be. Is there not a speech of Solon to which the concluding couplet of Gray's sonnet bears a more pointed resemblance than to any of the

INTERIOR of St. Oswald's Church, Grasmere.

"Not raised in nice proportions was the pile,
But large and massy; for duration built;
With pillars crowded, and the roof upheld
By naked rafters intricately crossed."

— The Excursion, Book v, p. 270.

passages you have quoted? He was told not to grieve for the loss of his son, as tears would be of no avail; "and for that very reason," replied he, "do I weep." It is high time I should thank you for the honourable mention you have made of me. It could not but be grateful to me to be praised by a poet who has written verses of which I would rather have been the author than of any produced in our time. What I now write to you, I have frequently said to many. . . . — I remain, my dear Sir, sincerely yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

TO WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

RYDAL MOUNT, April 20th [1822]

. . . You commend the fine conclusion of Russel's sonnet upon Philoctetes, and depreciate that form of composition. I do not wonder at this. I used to think it egregiously absurd, though the greatest poets since the revival of literature have written in it. Many years ago my sister happened to read to me the sonnets of Milton, which I could at that time repeat; but somehow or other I was singularly struck with the style of harmony, and the gravity, and republican austerity of those compositions. In the course of the same afternoon I produced three sonnets, and soon after many others; since that time, and from want of resolution to take up anything of length, I have filled up many a moment in writing sonnets, which, if I had never fallen into the practice, might easily have been better employed. *The Excursion* is proud of your

approbation. *The Recluse* has had a long sleep, save in my thoughts; my MSS. are so ill-penned, and blurred, that they are useless to all but myself; and at present I cannot face them. But if my stomach can be preserved in tolerable order, I hope you will hear of me again in the character chosen for the title of that poem. I am glad to hear from you. — I remain faithfully yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

TO WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

Rydal Mount, January 21, 1824.

My dear Sir, — . . . You promise me a beautiful copy of Dante, but I ought to mention that I possess the Parma folio of 1795 — much the *grandest* book on my shelves — presented to me by our common friend, Mr. Kenyon.

. . . You have given me minute criticism of *Laodamia*. I concur with you in what you say of the first stanza, and had several times attempted to alter it upon your grounds: I cannot, however, accede to your objection to the "second birth," merely because the expression has been degraded by conventiclers. I certainly meant nothing more by it than the *eadem cura*, and the *largior æther*, etc., of Virgil's 6th Æneid. All religions owe their origin, or acceptation, to the wish of the human heart to supply in another state of existence the deficiencies of this, and to carry still nearer to perfection whatever we admire in our present condition; so that there must be many modes of expression, arising out of this coincidence, or rather identity of feeling, com-

mon to all mythologies; and under this observation I should shelter the phrase from your censure; but I may be wrong in the particular case, though certainly not in the general principle. This leads to a remark in your last, "that you are disgusted with all books that treat of religion." I am afraid it is a bad sign in me that I have little relish for any other. Even in poetry it is the imaginative only, viz., that which is conversant with, or turns upon infinity, that powerfully affects me. Perhaps I ought to explain: I mean to say that, unless in those passages where thinge are lost to each other, and limits vanish, and aspirations are raised, I read with something too much like indifference. But all great poets are in this view powerful religionists, and therefore among many literary pleasures lost, I have not yet to lament over that of verse as departed. . . .

Pray be so good as to let me know what you think of Dante. It has become lately — owing a good deal, I believe, to the example of Schlegel — the fashion to extol him above measure. I have not read him for many years; his style I used to think admirable for conciseness and vigour, without abruptness; but I own that his fictions often struck me as offensively grotesque and fantastic, and I felt the poem tedious from various causes.

I have a strong desire to become acquainted with the Mr Hare whom you mention. To the honour of Cambridge, he is in the highest repute there, for his sound and extensive learning. I am happy to say that the Master of Trinity College, my brother, was the occasion of his being restored to the Muses from the Temple. To Mr Hare's

brother, Augustus, I am under great obligation for having volunteered the tuition of my elder son, who is at New College, Oxford, and who, though he is not a youth of quick parts, promises, from his assiduity and passionate love of classical literature, to become an excellent scholar. . . . — Believe me, ever sincerely and affectionately yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

Rydal Mount, May 28, 1825.

. . . Never, I think, have we had so beautiful a spring; sunshine and showers coming just as if they had been called for, by the spirits of Hope, Love, and Beauty. This spot is at present a paradise, if you will admit the term when I acknowledge that yesterday afternoon the mountains were whitened with a fall of snow. But this only served to give the landscape, with all its verdure, blossoms, and leafy trees, a striking Swiss air, which reminded us of Unterseen and Interlachen. . . . Theologians may puzzle their heads about dogmas as they will, the religion of gratitude cannot mislead us. Of that we are sure; and gratitude is the handmaid to hope, and hope the harbinger of faith. I look abroad upon Nature, I think of the best part of our Species, I lean upon my Friends, and I meditate upon the Scriptures, especially the Gospel of St. John, and my creed rises up of itself, with the ease of an exhalation, yet a fabric of adamant. — God bless you, my ever dear friend.

W. Wordsworth.

SONNETS ON THE LANGDALE PIKES

I

How clear, how keen, how marvellously bright
The effluence from yon distant mountain's head,
Which, strewn with snow smooth as the sky can shed,
Shines like another sun — on mortal sight
Uprisen, as if to check approaching Night,
And all her twinkling stars. Who now would tread,
If so he might, yon mountain's glittering head —
Terrestrial, but a surface, by the flight
Of sad mortality's earth-sullying wing,
Unswept, unstained? Nor shall the aërial Powers
Dissolve that beauty, destined to endure,
White, radiant, spotless, exquisitely pure,
Through all vicissitudes, till genial Spring
Has filled the laughing vales with welcome flowers.

II

The fairest, brightest, hues of ether fade;
The sweetest notes must terminate and die:
O Friend! thy flute has breathed a harmony [1]
Softly resounded through this rocky glade;
Such strains of rapture as the Genius played
In his still haunt on Bagdad's summit high;
He who stood visible to Mirza's eye,
Never before to human sight betrayed.

[1] The musician was Rev Samuel Tillbrook of Peter-house, Cambridge, who remodelled the Ivy Cottage at Rydal, after he had purchased it. (Wordsworth's Note.)

Lo, in the vale, the mists of evening spread!
The visionary Arches are not there,
Nor the green Islands, nor the shining Seas!
Yet sacred is to me this Mountain's head,
Whence I have risen, uplifted, on the breeze
Of harmony, above all earthly care.

THE PASS OF KIRKSTONE

I

Within the mind strong fancies work.
A deep delight the bosom thrills
Oft as I pass along the fork
Of these fraternal hills:
Where, save the rugged road, we find
No appanage of human kind,
Nor hint of man; if stone or rock
Seem not his handywork to mock
By something cognizably shaped;
Mockery — or model roughly hewn,
And left as if by earthquake strewn,
Or from the Flood escaped:
Altars for Druid service fit
(But where no fire was ever lit,
Unless the glow-worm to the skies
Thence offer nightly sacrifice);
Wrinkled Egyptian monument;
Green moss-grown tower; or hoary tent;
Tents of a camp that never shall be razed —
On which four thousand years have gazed!

THE Langdale Pikes from Thrang Crag.

"Yon mountain's glittering head,

. . . . . .

White, radiant, spotless, exquisitely pure,
Through all vicissitudes, till genial Spring
Has filled the laughing vales with welcome flowers."

— Sonnets on the Langdale Pikes, p. 297.

II

Ye plough-shares sparkling on the slopes!
Ye snow-white lambs that trip
Imprisoned 'mid the formal props
Of restless ownership!
Ye trees, that may to-morrow fall
To feed the insatiate Prodigal!
Lawns, houses, chattels, groves, and fields,
All that the fertile valley shields;
Wages of folly — baits of crime,
Of life's uneasy game the stake,
Playthings that keep the eyes awake
Of drowsy, dotard Time; —
O care! O guilt! — O vales and plains,
Here, 'mid his own unvexed domains,
A Genius dwells, that can subdue
At once all memory of You, —
Most potent when mists veil the sky,
Mists that distort and magnify;
While the coarse rushes, to the sweeping breeze,
Sigh forth their ancient melodies!

III

List to those shriller notes! — *that* march
Perchance was on the blast,
When, through this Height's inverted arch,
Rome's earliest legion passed!
— They saw, adventurously impelled,
And older eyes than theirs beheld,

This block — and yon, whose church-like frame
Gives to this savage Pass its name.
Aspiring Road! that lov'st to hide
Thy daring in a vapoury bourn,
Not seldom may the hour return
When thou shalt be my guide:
And I (as all men may find cause,
When life is at a weary pause,
And they have panted up the hill
Of duty with reluctant will)
Be thankful, even though tired and faint,
For the rich bounties of constraint;
Whence oft invigorating transports flow
That choice lacked courage to bestow!

IV

My Soul was grateful for delight
That wore a threatening brow;
A veil is lifted — can she slight
The scene that opens now?
Though habitation none appear,
The greenness tells, man must be there;
The shelter — that the pérspective
Is of the clime in which we live;
Where Toil pursues his daily round;
Where Pity sheds sweet tears — and Love,
In woodbine bower or birchen grove,
Inflicts his tender wound.
— Who comes not hither ne'er shall know
How beautiful the world below;

Nor can he guess how lightly leaps
The brook adown the rocky steeps.
Farewell, thou desolate Domain!
Hope, pointing to the cultured plain,
Carols like a shepherd-boy;
And who is she? — Can that be Joy!
Who, with a sunbeam for her guide,
Smoothly skims the meadows wide;
While Faith, from yonder opening cloud,
To hill and vale proclaims aloud,
"Whate'er the weak may dread, the wicked dare,
Thy lot, O Man, is good, thy portion, fair!"

OXFORD, May 30, 1820

Ye sacred Nurseries of blooming Youth!
In whose collegiate shelter England's Flowers
Expand, enjoying through their vernal hours
The air of liberty, the light of truth;
Much have ye suffered from Time's gnawing tooth:
Yet, O ye spires of Oxford! domes and towers!
Gardens and groves! your presence overpowers
The soberness of reason; till, in sooth,
Transformed, and rushing on a bold exchange,
I slight my own beloved Cam, to range
Where silver Isis leads my stripling feet;
Pace the long avenue, or glide adown
The stream-like windings of that glorious street —
An eager Novice robed in fluttering gown!

FROM SONNETS TO THE RIVER DUDDON

II

Child of the clouds! remote from every taint
Of sordid industry thy lot is cast;
Thine are the honours of the lofty waste[1]
Not seldom, when with heat the valleys faint,
Thy handmaid Frost with spangled tissue quaint
Thy cradle decks; — to chant thy birth, thou hast
No meaner Poet than the whistling Blast,
And Desolation is thy Patron-saint!
She guards thee, ruthless Power! who would not spare
Those mighty forests, once the bison's screen,
Where stalked the huge deer to his shaggy lair
Through paths and alleys roofed with darkest green;
Thousands of years before the silent air
Was pierced by whizzing shaft of hunter keen!

IX. THE STEPPING-STONES

The struggling Rill insensibly is grown
Into a Brook of loud and stately march,
Crossed ever and anon by plank or arch;
And, for like use, lo! what might seem a zone
Chosen for ornament — stone matched with stone
In studied symmetry, with interspace
For the clear waters to pursue their race
Without restraint. How swiftly have they flown,

[1] Wrynose Fell.

Succeeding — still succeeding! Here the Child
Puts, when the high-swoln Flood runs fierce and wild,
His budding courage to the proof; and here
Declining Manhood learns to note the sly
And sure encroachments of infirmity,
Thinking how fast time runs, life's end how near!

XIV

O Mountain Stream! the Shepherd and his Cot
Are privileged Inmates of deep solitude;
Nor would the nicest Anchorite exclude
A field or two of brighter green, or plot
Of tillage-ground, that seemeth like a spot
Of stationary sunshine: — thou hast viewed
These only, Duddon! with their paths renewed
By fits and starts, yet this contents thee not.
Thee hath some awful Spirit impelled to leave,
Utterly to desert, the haunts of men,
Though simple thy companions were and few;
And through this wilderness a passage cleave
Attended but by thy own voice, save when
The clouds and fowls of the air thy way pursue!

XV

From this deep chasm, where quivering sunbeams play
Upon its loftiest crags, mine eyes behold
A gloomy niche, capacious, blank, and cold;
A concave free from shrubs and mosses grey;
In semblance fresh, as if, with dire affray,

Some Statue, placed amid these regions old
For tutelary service, thence had rolled,
Startling the flight of timid Yesterday!
Was it by mortals sculptured? — weary slaves
Of slow endeavour! or abruptly cast
Into rude shape by fire, with roaring blast
Tempestuously let loose from central caves?
Or fashioned by the turbulence of waves,
Then, when o'er highest hills the Deluge passed?

XX. THE PLAIN OF DONNERDALE

The old inventive Poets, had they seen,
Or rather felt, the entrancement that detains
Thy waters, Duddon! 'mid these flowery plains —
The still repose, the liquid lapse serene,
Transferred to bowers imperishably green,
Had beautified Elysium! But these chains
Will soon be broken; — a rough course remains,
Rough as the past; where Thou, of placid mien,
Innocuous as the firstling of the flock,
And countenanced like a soft cerulean sky,
Shalt change thy temper; and, with many a shock
Given and received in mutual jeopardy,
Dance, like a Bacchanal, from rock to rock,
Tossing her frantic thyrsus wide and high!

XXI

Whence that low voice? — a whisper from the heart,
That told of days long past, when here I roved
With friends and kindred tenderly beloved.

ULPHA, in Duddon Valley.

"The old inventive Poets, had they seen,
Or rather felt, the entrancement that detains
Thy waters, Duddon! 'mid these flowery plains—
. . . . . .
Had beautified Elysium!"

Sonnets: The River Duddon, XX, p. 304.

Some who had early mandates to depart,
Yet are allowed to steal my path athwart
By Duddon's side; once more do we unite,
Once more, beneath the kind Earth's tranquil light;
And smothered joys into new being start.
From her unworthy seat, the cloudy stall
Of Time, breaks forth triumphant Memory;
Her glistening tresses bound, yet light and free
As golden locks of birch, that rise and fall
On gales that breathe too gently to recall
Aught of the fading year's inclemency!

THE WISHING-GATE[1]

Hope rules a land for ever green:
All powers that serve the bright-eyed Queen
Are confident and gay;
Clouds at her bidding disappear;
Points she to aught? — the bliss draws near,
And Fancy smooths the way.

Not such the land of Wishes — there
Dwell fruitless day-dreams, lawless prayer,
And thoughts with things at strife;
Yet how forlorn, should *ye* depart,
Ye superstitions of the *heart*,
How poor, were human life!

[1] In the vale of Grasmere, by the side of the old high-way leading to Ambleside, is a gate, which, time out of mind, has been called the Wishing-gate, from a belief that wishes formed or indulged there have a favorable issue. — (Wordsworth's Note.)

When magic lore abjured its might,
Ye did not forfeit one dear right,
One tender claim abate;
Witness this symbol of your sway,
Surviving near the public way,
The rustic Wishing-gate!

Inquire not if the faery race
Shed kindly influence on the place,
Ere northward they retired;
If here a warrior left a spell,
Panting for glory as he fell;
Or here a saint expired.

Enough that all around is fair,
Composed with Nature's finest care,
And in her fondest love —
Peace to embosom and content —
To overawe the turbulent,
The selfish to reprove.

Yea! even the Stranger from afar,
Reclining on this moss-grown bar,
Unknowing, and unknown,
The infection of the ground partakes,
Longing for his Beloved — who makes
All happiness her own.

Then why should conscious Spirits fear
The mystic stirrings that are here,
The ancient faith disclaim?

The local Genius ne'er befriends
Desires whose course in folly ends,
Whose just reward is shame.

Smile if thou wilt, but not in scorn,
If some, by ceaseless pains outworn,
Here crave an easier lot;
If some have thirsted to renew
A broken vow, or bind a true,
With firmer, holier knot.

And not in vain, when thoughts are cast
Upon the irrevocable past,
Some Penitent sincere
May for a worthier future sigh,
While trickles from his downcast eye
No unavailing tear.

The Worldling, pining to be freed
From turmoil, who would turn or speed
The current of his fate,
Might stop before this favoured scene,
At Nature's call, nor blush to lean
Upon the Wishing-gate.

The Sage, who feels how blind, how weak
Is man, though loth such help to *seek*,
Yet, passing, here might pause,
And thirst for insight to allay
Misgiving, while the crimson day
In quietness withdraws;

Or when the church-clock's knell profound
To Time's first step across the bound
Of midnight makes reply;
Time pressing on with starry crest,
To filial sleep upon the breast
Of dread eternity.

THE PRIMROSE OF THE ROCK[1]

A Rock there is whose homely front
The passing traveller slights;
Yet there the glow-worms hang their lamps,
Like stars, at various heights;
And one coy Primrose to that Rock
The vernal breeze invites.

What hideous warfare hath been waged,
What kingdoms overthrown,
Since first I spied that Primrose-tuft
And marked it for my own;
A lasting link in Nature's chain
From highest heaven let down!

The flowers, still faithful to the stems,
Their fellowship renew;
The stems are faithful to the root,
That worketh out of view;
And to the rock the root adheres
In every fibre true

[1] This rock still stands, — on the right hand a little way leading up the middle road from Rydal to Grasmere. (Wordsworth's Note.)

Close clings to earth the living rock,
  Though threatening still to fall;
The earth is constant to her sphere;
  And God upholds them all:
So blooms this lonely Plant, nor dreads
  Her annual funeral.

. . . . . .

Here closed the meditative strain;
  But air breathed soft that day,
The hoary mountain-heights were cheered,
  The sunny vale looked gay;
And to the Primrose of the Rock
  I gave this after-lay.

I sang — Let myriads of bright flowers,
  Like Thee, in field and grove
Revive unenvied; — mightier far,
  Than tremblings that reprove
Our vernal tendencies to hope,
  Is God's redeeming love;

That love which changed — for wan disease,
  For sorrow that had bent
O'er hopeless dust, for withered age —
  Their moral element,
And turned the thistles of a curse
  To types beneficent.

Sin-blighted though we are, we too,
The reasoning Sons of Men,
From one oblivious winter called
Shall rise, and breathe again;
And in eternal summer lose
Our threescore years and ten.

To humbleness of heart descends
This prescience from on high,
The faith that elevates the just,
Before and when they die;
And makes each soul a separate heaven,
A court for Deity.

TO ——[1]

ON HER FIRST ASCENT TO THE SUMMIT OF HELVELLYN

Inmate of a mountain dwelling,
Thou hast clomb aloft, and gazed
From the watch-towers of Helvellyn;
Awed, delighted, and amazed!

Potent was the spell that bound thee,
Not unwilling to obey;
For blue Ether's arms, flung round thee,
Stilled the pantings of dismay.

[1] The lady was Miss Blackett, then residing with Mr Montagu Burgoyne at Fox-Ghyll. We were tempted to remain too long upon the mountain; and I, imprudently, with the hope of shortening the way, led her among the crags and down a steep slope which entangled us in difficulties that were met by her with much spirit and courage. (Wordsworth's Note.)

THE Wishing Gate, Grasmere.

"Smile if thou wilt, but not in scorn,
If some, by ceaseless pains outworn,
Here crave an easier lot;
If some have thirsted to renew
A broken vow, or bind a true,
With firmer, holier knot."

— The Wishing Gate, p. 307.

Lo! the dwindled woods and meadows;
What a vast abyss is there!
Lo! the clouds, the solemn shadows,
And the glistenings — heavenly fair!

And a record of commotion
Which a thousand ridges yield;
Ridge, and gulf, and distant ocean
Gleaming like a silver shield!

Maiden! now take flight; — inherit
Alps or Andes — they are thine!
With the morning's roseate Spirit,
Sweep their length of snowy line;

Or survey their bright dominions
In the gorgeous colours drest,
Flung from off the purple pinions,
Evening spreads throughout the west!

Thine are all the coral fountains
Warbling in each sparry vault
Of the untrodden lunar mountains;
Listen to their songs! — or halt,

To Niphates' top invited,
Whither spiteful Satan steered;
Or descend where the ark alighted,
When the green earth re-appeared;

For the power of hills is on thee,
As was witnessed through thine eye
Then, when old Helvellyn won thee
To confess their majesty!

AT FURNESS ABBEY

Here, where, of havoc tired and rash undoing,
Man left this Structure to become Time's prey
A soothing spirit follows in the way
That Nature takes, her counter-work pursuing,
See how her Ivy clasps the sacred Ruin
Fall to prevent or beautify decay;
And, on the mouldered walls, how bright, how gay,
The flowers in pearly dews their bloom renewing!
Thanks to the place, blessings upon the hour;
Even as I speak the rising Sun's first smile
Gleams on the grass-crowned top of yon tall Tower
Whose cawing occupants with joy proclaim
Prescriptive title to the shattered pile
Where, Cavendish, *thine* seems nothing but a name!

AIREY-FORCE VALLEY[1]

—— Not a breath of air
Ruffles the bosom of this leafy glen,
From the brook's margin, wide around, the trees
Are stedfast as the rocks; the brook itself,

[1] Airey Force and Gowbarrow Fell, an area of 750 acres, were purchased in 1906 by the National Trust for preserving places of historic interest, and are now thrown open to the public.

Old as the hills that feed it from afar,
Doth rather deepen than disturb the calm
Where all things else are still and motionless.
And yet, even now, a little breeze, perchance
Escaped from boisterous winds that rage without,
Has entered, by the sturdy oaks unfelt,
But to its gentle touch how sensitive
Is the light ash! that, pendent from the brow
Of yon dim cave, in seeming silence makes
A soft eye-music of slow-waving boughs,
Powerful almost as vocal harmony
To stay the wanderer's steps and soothe his thoughts.

"FORTH FROM A JUTTING RIDGE"

Forth from a jutting ridge, around whose base
Winds our deep Vale, two heath-clad Rocks [1] ascend
In fellowship, the loftiest of the pair
Rising to no ambitious height; yet both,
O'er lake and stream, mountain and flowery mead,
Unfolding prospects fair as human eyes
Ever beheld. Up-led with mutual help,
To one or other brow of those twin Peaks
Were two adventurous Sisters wont to climb,
And took no note of the hour while thence they gazed,
The blooming heath their couch, gazed, side by side,
In speechless admiration. I, a witness
And frequent sharer of their calm delight

[1] To be found on the right of the coach road, not far from the "fir-grove," surrounded by thick shrubbery, but still heath-clad.

With thankful heart, to either Eminence
Gave the baptismal name each Sister bore.
Now are they parted, far as Death's cold hand
Hath power to part the Spirits of those who love
As they did love. Ye kindred Pinnacles —
That, while the generations of mankind
Follow each other to their hiding place
In time's abyss, are privileged to endure
Beautiful in yourselves, and richly graced
With like command of beauty — grant your aid
For MARY'S humble, SARAH'S silent claim,[1]
That their pure joy in nature may survive
From age to age in blended memory.

INSCRIPTION

FOR A MONUMENT[2] IN CROSTHWAITE CHURCH, IN THE VALE OF KESWICK 1843–1845

YE vales and hills whose beauty hither drew
The poet's steps, and fixed him here, on you
His eyes have closed! And ye, loved books, no more
Shall Southey feed upon your precious lore,
To works that ne'er shall forfeit their renown,
Adding immortal labours of his own —
Whether he traced historic truth, with zeal
For the State's guidance, or the Church's weal,
Or Fancy, disciplined by studious art,

[1] Mary Wordsworth and Sarah Hutchinson.

[2] Southey's monument stands on the east end of the altar tomb in the Church of St. Kentigern.

Informed his pen, or wisdom of the heart,
Or judgments sanctioned in the Patriot's mind
By reverence for the rights of all mankind.
Wide were his aims, yet in no human breast
Could private feelings meet for holier rest.
His joys, his griefs, have vanished like a cloud
From Skiddaw's top; but he to heaven was vowed
Through his industrious life, and Christian faith
Calmed in his soul the fear of change and death.

TO G. HUNTLY GORDON, ESQ.

Rydal Mount, July 29, 1829.

My dear Sir, — I hope you have enjoyed yourself in the country as we have been doing among our shady woods, and green hills, and invigorated streams. The summer is passing on, and I have not left home, and perhaps shall not; for it is far more from duty than inclination that I quit my dear and beautiful home; and duty pulls two ways. On the one side my mind stands in need of being fed by new objects for meditation and reflection, the more so because diseased eyes have cut me off so much from reading; and, on the other hand, I am obliged to look at the expense of distant travelling, as I am not able to take so much out of my body by walking as heretofore.

I have not got my *MS* back from the ——[1] whose managers have, between them, used me shamefully; but my complaint is principally of the editor, for with the pro-

[1] An annual to which Wordsworth had been induced to become a contributor.

prietor I had little direct connection. If you think it worth while, you shall, at some future day, see such parts of the correspondence as I have preserved. . . . I am properly served for having had any connection with such things. My only excuse is, that they offered me a very liberal sum, and that I have laboured hard through a long life, without more pecuniary emolument than a lawyer gets for two special retainers, or a public performer sometimes for two or three songs. Farewell; pray let me hear from you at your early convenience, And believe me faithfully your Much obliged,

Wm. Wordsworth.

TO CHARLES AND MARY LAMB FROM DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

Rydal Mount, 9th Jan., 1830.

My dear Friends, — My nephew John will set off to-morrow evening to Oxford, to take his Master of Arts degree, and thence proceed to London, where his time will be so short, there is no chance of being able to go to see you; but there is a possibility that your brother may happen to be in town at the same time. . . .

I do not ask *you*, Miss Lamb, to write, for I know you dislike the office; but dear Charles L., you whom I have known almost five-and-thirty years, I trust I do not in vain entreat you to let me have the eagerly desired letter at your earliest opportunity, which letter will, we hope, bring us tidings respecting H. C. Robinson. We have not heard anything concerning him since his departure from

CROSTHWAITE Church, Keswick.

"Ye vales and hills whose beauty hither drew
The poet's steps, and fixed him here, on you
His eyes have closed!"

— Inscription for Southey's Monument in Crosthwaite Church, p. 314.

England, though he promised absolutely to write on his arrival at Rome, and if his intentions were fulfilled, he must have been a resident there for many weeks. Do you see Talfourd? Does he prosper in his profession? What family has he? etc., etc. But I will not particularise persons, but include all in one general inquiry. . . . Tell us of all whom you know, in whom you know us also to be interested, but above all, be very minute in what regards your own dear selves, for there are no persons in the world, exclusive of members of our own family, of whom we think and talk so frequently, or with such delightful remembrances. Your removal to London (though to my thought London is scarcely London without you) shall not prevent my seeing you both in your own cottage, if I live to go there again; but at present I have no distant plans leading me thither.

Now that Mr Monkhouse[1] is gone, we females have no absolute home there, and should we go it will probably be on our own way to the Continent, or to the southern shores of England. Wishes I do now and then indulge of at least revisiting Switzerland, and again crossing the Alps, and even strolling on to Rome. But, there is a great change in my feelings respecting plans for the future. If we make any, I entertain them as an amusement perhaps for a short while, but never set my heart upon anything which is to be accomplished three months hence, and have no satisfaction whatever in *schemes*. When one has lived almost sixty years, one is satisfied with present enjoyment

[1] Mr. Thomas Monkhouse, a valued friend, whose hospitable home in London had always been open to his friends.

and thankful for it, without daring to count on what is to be done six months hence.

My brother and sister are both in excellent health. In *him* there is no failure except the tendency to inflammation in his eyes, which disables him from reading much, or at all by candle-light; and the use of the pen is irksome to him. However, he has a most competent and willing amanuensis in his daughter, who takes all labour from mother's and aged aunt's hands. His muscular powers are in no degree diminished. Indeed, I think he walks regularly more than ever, finding fresh air the best bracing to his weak eyes. He is still the crack skater on Rydal Lake, and, as to climbing of mountains, the hardiest and the youngest are yet hardly a match for him. In composition I can perceive no failure, and his imagination seems as vigorous as in youth; yet he shrinks from his great work, and both during the last and present winter has been employed in writing small poems. Do not suppose, my dear friend, that I write this boastingly. Far from it. It is in thankfulness for present blessings, yet always with the sense of the possibility that all will have a sudden check; and, if not so, the certainty that in the course of man's life, but a few years of vigorous health and strength can be allotted to him. For this reason, my sister and I take every opportunity of pressing upon him the necessity of applying to his great work, and this he feels, resolves to do it, and again resolution fails. And now I almost fear habitually that it will be ever so.

I have told you she is well — and indeed I think her much stronger than a few years ago — and (now that I am

for the whole of this winter set aside as a walker) she takes my place, and will return from an eight miles' walk with my brother unfatigued. Miss Hutchinson, and her sister Joanna, are both with us.[1] Miss H. is perfectly well, and Joanna very happy, though she may be always considered an invalid. Her home is in the Isle of Man, and, with the first mild breezes of spring, she intends returning thither, with her sailor brother Henry — they two (toddling down the hill) together. She is an example for us all. With the better half of her property, she purchased Columbian bonds, at above 70, gets no interest, will not sell, consequently the cheapness of the little isle tempted her thither on a visit, and she finds the air so suitable for her health, and everything else so much to her mind, that she will, in spite of our unwillingness to part with her, make it her home. As to her lost property, she never regrets it. She has so reduced her wants that she declares she is now richer than she ever was in her life, and so she is. . . . I believe you never saw Joanna, and it is a pity; for you would have loved her very much. She possesses all the good qualities of the Hutchinsons. My niece Dora is very active, and her father's helper at all times; and in domestic concerns she takes all the trouble from her mother and me. . . .

TO SIR W. ROWAN HAMILTON

Rydal Mount, Sept. 9th, 1830.

. . . We live in a strange sort of way in this country at the present season. Professor Wilson invited thirty per-

[1] Two sisters of Mrs. Wordsworth.

sons to dine with him the other day, though he had neither provisions nor cook. I have no doubt, however, that all passed off well; for contributions of eatables came from one neighbouring house, to my knowledge, and good spirits, good humour, and good conversation would make up for many deficiencies. In another house, a cottage about a couple of miles from the Professor's, were fifty guests — how lodged I leave you to guess — only we were told the overflow, after all possible cramming, was received in the offices, farm-houses, etc., adjoining. All this looks more like what one has been told of Irish hospitality than aught that the formal English are up to.

TO SIR W. ROWAN HAMILTON

LOWTHER CASTLE, September 26, 1830.

. . . Did I tell you that Professor Wilson with his two sons and daughter have been, and probably still are, at Elleray? He heads the gaieties of the neighbourhood, and has presided as steward at two regattas. Do these employments come under your notions of action as opposed to contemplation? Why should they not? Whatever the high moralists may say, the political economists will, I conclude, approve them as setting capital afloat, and giving an impulse to manufacture and handicrafts — not to speak of the improvement which may come thence to navigation and nautical science. . . .

There is another acquaintance of mine also recently gone — a person for whom I never had any love, but with whom I had for a short time a good deal of intimacy — I

mean Hazlitt, whose death you may have seen announced in the papers. He was a man of extraordinary acuteness, but perverse as Lord Byron himself, whose *Life* by Galt I have been skimming since I came here.

TO SIR W. ROWAN HAMILTON

TRINITY LODGE, CAMBRIDGE, November 26, 1830.

I reached this place nine days ago . . . On the 5th of November, I was a solitary equestrian entering the romantic little town of Ashford-in-the-Waters, on the edge of the wilds of Derbyshire, at the close of the day, when guns were beginning to be let off and squibs to be fired on every side, so that I thought it prudent to dismount and lead my horse through the place, and so on to Bakewell, two miles further. You must know how I happened to be riding through these wild regions. It was my wish that Dora should have the benefit of her pony while at Cambridge, and, very valiantly and economically, I determined, unused as I am to horsemanship, to ride the creature myself. I sent James with it to Lancaster; there mounted, stopped a day at Manchester, a week at Coleorton, and so reached the end of my journey safe and sound — not, however, without encountering two days of tempestuous rain. Thirty-seven miles did I ride in one day through the worst of these storms, and what was my resource? Guess again — writing verses — to the memory of my departed friend Sir George Beaumont, whose house I had left the day before. While buffeting the other storm I composed a sonnet on the splendid domain of Chatsworth, which I had

seen in the morning, as contrasted with the secluded habitations of the narrow dells in the Peak; and, as I passed the tame and manufacture-disfigured country of Lancashire, I was reminded, by the faded leaves, of Spring, and threw off a few stanzas of an ode to May. But too much of self and my own performances upon my steed, a descendant no doubt of Pegasus, though her owner and present rider knew nothing of it.

Now a word about Professor Airy: I have seen him twice, but I did not communicate your message; it was at dinner and at an evening party, and I thought it best not to speak of it till I saw him, which I mean to do, upon a morning call. There is a great deal of intellectual activity within the walls of this College, and in the University at large; but conversation turns mainly upon the state of the country and the late change in the administration. The fires have extended to within eight miles of this place, from which I saw one of the worst, if not absolutely the worst, indicated by a redness in the sky, a few nights ago. . . . There is an interesting person in this University for a day or two, whom I have not yet seen, Kenelm Digby, author of *The Broadstone of Honour*, a book of chivalry, which I think was put into your hands at Rydal Mount. We have also a respectable show of blossom in poetry — two brothers of the name of Tennyson, one in particular not a little promising. . . . My daughter has resumed her German labours, and is not easily drawn from what she takes to. . . . She owes a long letter to her brother in Germany, who, by the by, tells us that he will not cease to look out for the book of Kant you wished for.

HELVELLYN, Striding Edge, and Red Tarn ;
Ullswater in distance.

"For the power of hills is on thee,
As was witnessed through thine eye
Then, when old Helvellyn won thee
To confess their majesty!"

— To Miss Blackett, p. 312.

TO SIR W. ROWAN HAMILTON

Buxted Rectory, Sussex, 24th January, 1831.

. . . You are interested about Mr Coleridge. I saw him several times lately, and had long conversations with him. It grieves me to say that his constitution seems much broken up. I have heard that he has been worse since I saw him. His mind has lost none of its vigour, but he is certainly in that state of bodily health that no one who knows him could feel justified in holding out the hope of even an introduction to him as an inducement for your visiting London. Much do I regret this, for you may pass your life without meeting a man of such commanding faculties. I hope that my criticisms have not deterred your sister from poetical composition. The world had indeed had enough of it lately, such as it is; but that is no reason why a sensibility like hers should not give vent to itself in verse.

TO JOHN KENYON

Rydal Mount, Sept. 9, 1831.

. . . . . .

The summer that is over has been with us as well as with you a brilliant one, for sunshine and fair calm weather — brilliant also for its unexampled gaiety in regattas, balls, *déjeuners,* pic-nics by the lakeside, on the islands, and on the mountain-tops, fireworks by night, dancing on the green-sward by day — in short, a fever of pleasure from morn to dewy eve — from dewy eve till break of day.

Our youths and maidens, like Chaucer's Squire, "have slept no more than doth the nightingale," and our old men have looked as bright as Tithonus when his withered cheek reflected the blushes of Aurora upon the first declaration of her passion for him. In the room where I am now dictating, we had, three days ago a dance — forty beaus and belles, besides matrons, ancient spinsters and grey-beards — and to-morrow in this same room we are to muster for a venison feast. Why are you not here either to enjoy or to philosophise upon this dissipation? Our party to-morrow is not so large but that we could find room for you and Mrs Kenyon. The disturbed state of the Continent is no doubt the reason why, in spite of the Reform Bill, such multitudes of pleasure-hunters have found their way this summer to the Lakes.

After so much levity, Mary shall transcribe for you a serious stanza or two, intended for an inscription in a part of the grounds of Rydal Mount with which you are not acquainted — a field adjoining our garden which I purchased two or three years ago.

Under the shade of some pollard oaks, and on a green terrace in that field, we have lived no small part of the long bright days of the summer gone by; and in a hazel nook of this favourite piece of ground, is a Stone, for which I wrote one day the following serious Inscription. You will forgive its egotism:

In these fair Vales, hath many a Tree
At Wordsworth's suit been spared,
And from the Builder's hand this Stone
For some rude beauty of its own,

Was rescued by the Bard;
Long may it rest in peace, & here
Perchance the tender-hearted
Will heave a gentle sigh for him
As One of the Departed.

TO SIR WALTER SCOTT[1]

Carlisle, Sept. 16 [1831].

My dear Sir Walter, — "There 's a man wi' a veil, and a lass drivin'," exclaimed a little urchin, as we entered Merrie Carlisle a couple of hours ago, on our way to Abbotsford. . . .

A nephew of mine,[2] a student of Christchurch — and I may add, a distinguished one — to whom I could not but allow the pleasure of accompanying us, has taken the Newcastle road into Scotland, hoping to join me at Abbotsford. If he should arrive before us, let him be no restraint upon you whatever. Let him loose in your library or on the Tweed with his fishing-rod, or in the stubble with his gun (he is but a novice of a shot, by-the-by) and he will be no trouble to any part of your family. I am, very affectionately yours.

W. W.

[1] Written *en route* to Abbotsford in order to see Sir Walter Scott before his departure for Italy. Wordsworth was suffering severely from one of his attacks of inflammation of the eyes; his daughter Dora was his travelling companion. This was the last meeting of two men whose uninterrupted friendship had continued twenty-eight years.

[2] Afterwards Bishop Wordsworth of St. Andrews.

YARROW REVISITED[1]

THE gallant Youth, who may have gained,
Or seeks a "winsome Marrow,"
Was but an Infant in the lap
When first I looked on Yarrow;
Once more, by Newark's Castle-gate
Long left without a warder,
I stood, looked, listened, and with Thee,
Great Minstrel of the Border!

Grave thoughts ruled wide on that sweet day,
Their dignity installing
In gentle bosoms, while sere leaves
Were on the bough, or falling;
But breezes played, and sunshine gleamed —
The forest to embolden;
Reddened the fiery hues, and shot
Transparence through the golden.

For busy thoughts the Stream flowed on
In foamy agitation;
And slept in many a crystal pool
For quiet contemplation:
No public and no private care
The freeborn mind enthralling,
We made a day of happy hours,
Our happy days recalling.

[1] A memorial of a day passed with Sir Walter Scott and other friends, visiting the Banks of the Yarrow under his guidance immediately before his departure from Abbotsford for Naples. (Wordsworth's Note.)

Brisk Youth appeared, the Morn of youth,
With freaks of graceful folly, —
Life's temperate Noon, her sober Eve,
Her Night not melancholy;
Past, present, future, all appeared
In harmony united,
Like guests that meet, and some from far,
By cordial love invited.

And if, as Yarrow, through the woods
And down the meadow ranging,
Did meet us with unaltered face,
Though we were changed and changing;
If, *then*, some natural shadows spread
Our inward prospect over,
The soul's deep valley was not slow
Its brightness to recover.

Eternal blessings on the Muse,
And her divine employment!
The blameless Muse, who trains her Sons
For hope and calm enjoyment;
Albeit sickness, lingering yet,
Has o'er their pillow brooded;
And Care waylays their steps — a Sprite
Not easily eluded.

For thee, O Scott! compelled to change
Green Eildon-hill and Cheviot
For warm Vesuvio's vine-clad slopes;
And leave thy Tweed and Tiviot

For mild Sorento's breezy waves;
  May classic Fancy linking
With native Fancy her fresh aid,
  Preserve thy heart from sinking!

Oh! while they minister to thee,
  Each vying with the other,
May Health return to mellow Age
  With Strength, her venturous brother;
And Tiber, and each brook and rill
  Renowned in song and story,
With unimagined beauty shine,
  Nor lose one ray of glory!

For Thou, upon a hundred streams,
  By tales of love and sorrow,
Of faithful love, undaunted truth,
  Hast shed the power of Yarrow;
And streams unknown, hills yet unseen,
  Wherever they invite Thee,
At parent Nature's grateful call,
  With gladness must requite Thee.

A gracious welcome shall be thine,
  Such looks of love and honour
As thy own Yarrow gave to me
  When first I gazed upon her;
Beheld what I had feared to see,
  Unwilling to surrender
Dreams treasured up from early days,
  The holy and the tender.

"O ye spires of Oxford! domes and towers!
Gardens and groves! your presence overpowers
The soberness of reason."

—Sonnet: "Oxford," p. 301.

And what, for this frail world, were all
That mortals do or suffer,
Did no responsive harp, no pen,
Memorial tribute offer?
Yea, what were mighty Nature's self?
Her features, could they win us,
Unhelped by the poetic voice
That hourly speaks within us?

Nor deem that localised Romance
Plays false with our affections;
Unsanctifies our tears — made sport
For fanciful dejections:
Ah, no! the visions of the past
Sustain the heart in feeling
Life as she is — our changeful Life,
With friends and kindred dealing.

Bear witness, Ye, whose thoughts that day
In Yarrow's groves were centred;
Who through the silent portal arch
Of mouldering Newark entered;
And clomb the winding stair that once
Too timidly was mounted
By the "last Minstrel," (not the last!)
Ere he his Tale recounted.

Flow on for ever, Yarrow Stream!
Fulfil thy pensive duty,
Well pleased that future Bards should chant
For simple hearts thy beauty;

To dream-light dear while yet unseen,
Dear to the common sunshine,
And dearer still, as now I feel,
To memory's shadowy moonshine!

TO SIR WILLIAM ROWAN HAMILTON

MORESBY, June 25, 1832.

. . . My dear sister has been languishing more than seven months in a sick-room, nor dare I or any of her friends entertain a hope that her strength will ever be restored; and the course of public affairs, as I think I told you before, threatens, in my view, destruction to the Institutions of the country; an event which, whatever may rise out of it hereafter, cannot but produce distress and misery for two or three generations at least. In any times I am but at best a poor and unpunctual correspondent, yet I am pretty sure you would have heard from me but for this reason; therefore let the statement pass for an apology as far as you think fit. . . .

It gives me much pleasure that you and Coleridge have met, and that you were not disappointed in the conversation of a man from whose writings you had previously drawn so much delight and improvement. He and my beloved sister are the two beings to whom my intellect is most indebted, and they are now proceeding, as it were *pari passu*, along the path of sickness — I will not say towards the grave, but I trust towards a blessed immortality.

It was not my intention to write so seriously; my heart is full, and you must excuse it. You do not tell me how

you like Cambridge as a place, nor what you thought of its buildings and other works of art. Did you not see Oxford as well? It has greatly the advantage over Cambridge in its happy intermixture of streets, churches, and collegiate buildings.

. . . A fortnight ago I came hither to my son and daughter, who are living a gentle, happy, quiet, and useful life together. My daughter Dora is also with us. . . . A week ago appeared here Mr W. S. Landor the poet, and author of the *Imaginary Conversations*, which probably have fallen in your way. We had never met before, though several letters had passed between us, and as I had not heard that he was in England, my gratification in seeing him was heightened by surprise. We passed a day together at the house of my friend Mr Rawson, on the banks of Wast-Water. His conversation is lively and original, his learning great, though he will not allow it, and his laugh the heartiest I have heard for a long time. It is, I think, not much less than twenty years since he left England for France and afterwards Italy, where he hopes to end his days, — nay, has fixed near Florence upon the spot where he wishes to be buried.

TO HENRY NELSON COLERIDGE

July 29, 1834.

. . . . . .

It is nearly forty years since I first became acquainted with him whom we have just lost;[1] and though, with the exception of six weeks when we were on the Continent

[1] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whose death occurred on July 25, 1834.

along with my daughter, I have seen little of him for the last twenty years, his mind has been habitually present with me, with an accompanying feeling that he was still in the flesh. That frail tie is broken, and most of those who are nearest and dearest to me must prepare and endeavour to follow him.

TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

RYDAL MOUNT [Undated, but probably 1835].

. . . . . .

The weather here is very sharp, and to-day we have a blustering wind, tearing off the blossoms and twigs from the trees with almost equal disregard. At breakfast, this morning, we received from some unknown friend the *Examiner,* containing a friendly notice of my late volume. Is it discreditable to say that these things interest me little but as they may tend to promote the sale, which, with the prospects of unavoidable expense before me, is a greater object to me, much greater, than it would otherwise have been? The private testimonies which I receive very frequently of the effect of my writings upon the hearts and minds of men are indeed very gratifying, because I am sure *they* must be written under pure influences; but it is not necessarily, or even probably so, with strictures intended for the public. The one are *effusions,* the other *compositions,* and liable in various degrees to intermixtures that take from their value. It is amusing to me to have proofs how critics and authors differ in judgment, both as to fundamentals and incidentals. As an instance of the latter,

see the passage where I speak of Horace, quoted in the *Examiner*. The critic marks in italics for approbation certain passages, but he takes no notice of three words, in delicacy of feeling worth, in my estimation, all the rest — "he only listening." Again, what he observes in praise of my mode of dealing with nature as opposed to my treatment of human life — which, as he says, is not to be trusted — would be reversed, as it has been by many, who hear that I ran into excess in my pictures of the influence of natural objects, and assign to them an importance which they are not entitled to; while in my treatment of the intellectual instincts, affections, and passions of mankind, I am nobly distinguished by having drawn out into notice the points in which they resemble each other, in preference to dwelling (as dramatic authors must do) upon those in which they differ. If my writings are to last, it will, I myself believe, be mainly owing to this characteristic. They will please for the single cause, "That we have all of us one human heart." Farewell.

TO MRS. WORDSWORTH[1]

Munich, Monday July 17, 1837.

. . . At present I consider our *tour* finished; and all my thoughts are fixed upon home, where I am most impatient to be, . . . particularly as there are (as must be the case with all companions in travel) so many things in habit and inclination, where Mr R. and I differ. Upon these I

[1] Mrs. Wordsworth was at Brinsop Court, Herefordshire, during this fifth and last of Wordsworth's Continental tours. His companion was Henry Crabb Robinson, and they were absent nearly five months.

shall not dwell at present, as the only one I care about is this: he has no home to go to but chambers, and wishes to stay abroad, at least to linger abroad, which I, having the blessing of a home, do not. Again, he takes delight in loitering about towns, gossiping, and attending reading-rooms, and going to coffee-houses, and in *table d'hôtes*, etc., gabbling German or any other tongue, all which places and practices are my abomination. In the evenings I cannot read, as the candlelight hurts my eyes; and I have therefore no resource but to go to bed, while I should like exceedingly, when upon our travels, if it were agreeable to him, to rise early; but though he will do this, he dislikes it much, so that I don't press it. He sleeps so much at odd times in the day that he does not like going to bed till midnight. In this, and a hundred other things, our tastes and habits are quite at variance, though nobody can be more obliging in giving up his own; but you must be aware it is very unpleasant in me to require this. In fact, I have very strong reasons for wishing this tour, which I have found so beneficial to my mind, at an end for the sake of my body. . . .

. . . A man must travel alone, I mean without one of his family, to feel what his family is to him! How often have I wished for James to assist me about the carriage, greasing the wheels, etc., a most tedious employment, fastening the baggage, etc., for nothing can exceed the stupidity of these foreigners. Tell him how I wish I had been rich enough to bring him along with me! . . . God bless you all!

HIGH Street, Oxford.

"I slight my own beloved Cam, to range
Where silver Isis leads my stripling feet;
Pace the long avenue, or glide adown
The stream-like windings of that glorious street."

Thursday Morning, 20th.

. . . I am quite tired of this place, the weather has been very bad, and after the Galleries close, which is at twelve o'clock and one, I have nothing to do; and, as I cannot speak German, time moves very heavily. The Ticknors are here, and I have passed a couple of hours every evening with them. — God bless you again! . . .

TO B. R. HAYDON

Rydal Mount, 28th February, 1832.

. . . . . .

There are some opinions in your "Essay"[1] about which I should like to talk with you, as, for example, when you say Raphael learned nothing from Perugino but what he had to unlearn. Surely this is far from the truth; undoubtedly there is in him as in all the elder masters a hardness, and a stiffness, and a want of skill in composition, but in simplicity and in depth of expression, he deserves to be looked up to by Raphael to the last of days. The "Transfiguration" would have been a much finer picture than it is if Raphael had not at that period of his life lost sight of Perugino and others, his predecessors.

Whoever goes into Italy, if pictures be much of an object, ought to begin where I ended, at Venice. Not as I did with the pure and admirable productions of Fra Bartolomeo at Lucca, and with Raphael at Rome, so on to

[1] Haydon's Essay on "Painting" in Encyclopædia Britannica. Haydon replied, admitting that Wordsworth was right, saying, "I fear it was thoughtless to speak of Perugino as I did, which I will correct, for you are certainly right."

Florence, Bologna, Pavia, and Milan, and Florence by way of conclusion. Italian pictures ought to be taken in order, or as nearly as may be so, Milan, Padua, Venice, Bologna, Pavia, Florence, and Rome.

Your "Essay" does you *great credit.* I had a sad account of the French Academy at Rome. The students appear to be doing little or nothing, and spend their time in dissipation.

FROM WORDSWORTH'S CONVERSATION

(REPORTED BY LADY RICHARDSON)

August 28, 1841.

. . . . . .

At the time I resolved to dedicate myself to poetry, and separate myself from the ordinary lucrative professions, it would certainly have been a great object to me to have reaped the profits I should have done from my writings, but for the stupidity of Mr Gifford and the impertinence of Mr Jeffrey. It would have enabled me to purchase many books which I could not obtain, and I should have gone to Italy earlier, which I never could afford to do until I was sixty-five, when Moxon gave me a thousand pounds for my writings. This was the only kind of injury Mr Jeffrey did me, for I immediately perceived that his mind was of that kind that his individual opinion on poetry was of no consequence to me whatever, that it was only by the influence his periodical exercised at the time, in preventing my poems being read and sold, that he could injure me; for, feeling that my writings were founded on what

was true and spiritual in human nature, I knew the time would come when they must be known, and I never therefore felt his opinion of the slightest value, except in preventing the young of that generation from receiving impressions which might have been of use to them through life. I say this, I hope, not in a boasting spirit, but I am now daily surprised by receiving letters from various places at home and abroad expressive of gratitude to me, from persons I never saw or heard of. As this occurs now, I may fairly conclude that it might have been so when the poems appeared, but for the tyranny exercised over public opinion by the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews*.

TO PROFESSOR HENRY REED[1]

Rydal Mount, July 18, 1842.

My dear Sir, — . . . I have just resigned the office which to my own great convenience and advantage I have held for nearly 30 years, in favour of my younger son, who had acted under me for more than 11 years. By this step my small income has been reduced more than one-half, for there is no truth in what you may have seen in the newspapers that "I had retired upon a pension."

I lately received from Mr Dickens a printed circular letter, in which he states that, having presented through Mr Clay a petition to Congress, signed by the whole body of American authors, praying for the establishment of an international law of Copyright — to counteract this petition, as the circular states, a meeting was held at Boston,

[1] Editor of the first American edition of Wordsworth's Poems.

at which a memorial against any change in the existing state of things was agreed to, with but one dissentient voice. This document, which was received, deliberately stated that if English authors were invested with any control over the republication of their own books, it would be no longer possible for American editors to alter and adapt them (as they do now) to the American taste.

Thus far the circular. And I ask you if it be possible that any person of the lowest degree of respectability in Boston could sign a document in its spirit so monstrous, and so injurious in its tendency?

. . . I returned to Rydal a month ago, after having been nearly six weeks in London. . . . The book trade is in a most depressed state — nothing but such books as have a connection with Theology, and the religious ferment that originated in Oxford, seeming to have the power of inducing people to part with their money for literature's sake. Nor is this much to be wondered at, for all ranks and classes are compelled by difficulties in the state of things to reduce their expenditure. . . . Your much obliged friend,

Wm. Wordsworth.

TO PROFESSOR HENRY REED

Rydal Mount, March 23, 1843.

. . . You give me pleasure by the interest you take in the various pages in which I speak of the poets, my contemporaries, who are no more. Dear Southey, one of the most eminent, is just added to the list a few days ago. I

HELM Crag, Grasmere Lake.

" The shadowy vale, the sunny mountain-top;
Woods waving in the wind their lofty heads,
Or hushed; the roaring waters and the still —
They see the offering of my lifted hands."

— From The Excursion, Book ix, p. 288.

went over to Keswick to attend his remains to their last earthly abode. For upwards of a year and a half his powers of recognition — except very rarely, and but for a moment — have been all but extinct. His bodily health was grievously impaired, and his medical attendant says that he must have died long since, but for the very great strength of his natural constitution. As to his literary remains they must be very considerable, but, except his epistolary correspondence, more or less unfinished. His letters cannot but be very numerous; and, if carefully collected, and judiciously selected, will, I doubt not, add greatly to his reputation. He had a fine talent for that species of composition, and took much delight in throwing off his mind in that way. Mr Taylor, the dramatic author, is his literary executor.

. . . I will add a few words upon the wish you express that I would pay a tribute to the English poets of past ages, who never had the fame they are entitled to, and have long been almost entirely neglected. Had this been suggested to me earlier in life, or had it come into my thoughts, the thing in all probability would have been done. At present I cannot hope it will, but it may afford you some satisfaction to be told that in the MS. poem upon my poetic education there is a whole book of about 600 lines upon my obligation to writers of imagination, and chiefly the poets, though I have not expressly named those to whom you allude, and for whom and many others of their age I have a high respect. The character of the schoolmaster, about whom you inquire, had, like the Wanderer in *The Excursion*, a solid foundation in fact and

reality, but, like him, it was also in some degree a composition. I will not, and need not, call it an invention — it was no such thing; but were I to enter into details I fear it would impair the effect of the whole upon your mind, nor could I do it at all to my own satisfaction. I send you, according to your wish, the additions to the ecclesiastical sonnets, and also the last poem from my pen. I threw it off two or three weeks ago, being in a great measure impelled to it by the desire I felt to do justice to the memory of a heroine, whose conduct presented some time ago a striking contrast to the inhumanity with which our countrymen shipwrecked lately upon the French coast have been treated. — Ever most faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

I must request that *Grace Darling* may not be reprinted.

TO EDWARD MOXON

October 12, 1846.

. . . . . .

Miss Barrett, I am pleased to learn, is so far recovered as to have taken to herself a husband.[1] He is a very able man. Doubtless they will speak more intelligibly to each other than they have yet done to the public.

[1] The marriage of Robert Browning to Elizabeth Barrett took place on September 12, 1846.

TO SIR ROBERT PEEL[1]

Rydal Mount, Ambleside, April 4, 1843.

Dear Sir Robert, — Having since my first acquaintance with Horace borne in mind the charge which he tells us frequently thrilled his ear,

> Solve senescentem maturè sanus equum, ne
> Peccet ad extremum,

I could not but be deterred from incurring responsibilities which I might not prove equal to, at so late a period of life; but as my mind has been entirely set at ease by the very kind and most gratifying letter with which you have honoured me, and by a second communication from the Lord Chamberlain to the same effect, and in a like spirit, I have accepted with unqualified pleasure a distinction sanctioned by her Majesty, and which expresses, upon authority entitled to the highest respect, a sense of the national importance of Poetic Literature; and so favourable an opinion of the success with which it has been cultivated by one, who, after this additional mark of your esteem, cannot refrain from again assuring you how deeply sensible he is of the many and great obligations he owes to your goodness, and who has the honour to be, dear Sir Robert, most faithfully, your humble servant,

William Wordsworth.

[1] In reply to a letter from the Prime Minister urging Wordsworth to reconsider his refusal to become Poet-Laureate, and adding, "I will undertake that nothing shall be *required* of you."

TO PROFESSOR REED

Rydal Mount, Ambleside, July 1, 1845.

. . . My absence from home lately was not of more than three weeks. I took the journey to London solely to pay my respects to the Queen upon my appointment to the Laureateship upon the decease of my friend Mr Southey. The weather was very cold, and I caught an inflammation in one of my eyes, which rendered my stay in the south very uncomfortable. I nevertheless did, in respect to the object of my journey, all that was required. The reception given me by the Queen at her ball was most gracious. Mrs Everett, the wife of your minister, among many others, was a witness to it, without knowing who it was. It moved her to the shedding of tears. This effect was in part produced, I suppose, by American habits of feeling, as pertaining to a republican government. To see a grey-haired man of seventy-five years of age, kneeling down in a large assembly to kiss the hand of a young woman, is a sight for which institutions essentially democratic do not prepare a spectator of either sex, and must naturally place the opinions upon which a republic is founded, and the sentiments which support it, in strong contrast with a government based and upheld as ours is. I am not, therefore, surprised that Mrs Everett was moved, as she herself described to persons of my acquaintance, among others to Mr Rogers, the poet. By the by, of this gentleman, now I believe, in his eighty-third year, I saw more than any other person except my host, Mr Moxon, while I was in London. He is singularly fresh and strong for his years, and his

GRAVES of the Wordsworth Family in St. Oswald's Churchyard.

Scene of Books VI and VII of "The Excursion"

mental faculties (with the exception of his memory a little) not at all impaired. It is remarkable that he and the Rev. W. Bowles were both distinguished as poets when I was a schoolboy, and they have survived almost all their eminent contemporaries, several of whom came into notice long after them. Since they became known, Burns, Cowper, Mason, the author of "Caractacus" and friend of Gray, have died. Thomas Warton, Laureate, then Byron, Shelley, Keats, and a good deal later, Scott, Coleridge, Crabbe, Southey, Lamb, the Ettrick Shepherd, Cary, the translator of Dante, Crowe, the author of "Lewesdon Hill," and others more or less distinguished have disappeared. And now of English poets, advanced in life, I cannot recall any but James Montgomery, Thomas Moore, and myself, who are living, except the octogenarian with whom I began.

I saw Tennyson when I was in London, several times. He is decidedly the first of our living poets, and I hope will live to give the world still better things. You will be pleased to hear that he expressed in strongest terms his gratitude to my writings. To this I was far from indifferent, though persuaded that he is not much in sympathy with what I should myself most value in my attempts, viz.: the spirituality with which I have endeavoured to invest the material universe, and the moral relations under which I have wished to exhibit its most ordinary appearances. . . .

I have not left room to subscribe myself more than

Affectionately yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

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